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A WANDERING STUDENT IN THE FAR EAST

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A Wandering Student in the Far East

Peter. *The Author.* *Mr Chou.*

A Wandering Student in the Far East

BY

THE EARL OF [illegible]

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IN TWO VOLUMES

William Blackwood and Sons
Edinburgh and London
1908

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A Wandering Student in the Far East

BY

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY, M.P.

AUTHOR OF 'SPORT AND POLITICS UNDER AN EASTERN SKY,'
AND 'ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF EMPIRE IN ASIA'

"He (Dr Johnson) talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of China."—*Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I.

William Blackwood and Sons
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1908

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PREFACE.

In writing the book which is herewith submitted to the public, I have kept two classes of readers more especially in view — firstly, that part of the reading public which takes a general interest in records of travel in distant lands; and secondly, that part of it which takes something more than an academic interest in the trade and enterprise of the people of Great Britain in foreign countries. To both of these classes the subjects of my present study—China and Japan—will, I believe, prove the sources of no small attraction. China, with her vast undeveloped resources, her overwhelming population, and, above all, her uneasy but fateful movement away from the well-worn paths of her past and towards

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the untrodden ways of an as yet undecipherable future, looms ever larger and larger upon the horizon of the public view; Japan, at all times a centre of attraction to the casual traveller from the West, acquires a daily growing interest for the people whose interests in Asia are, by common consent and by the more formal testimony of solemn treaty stipulations, inextricably interwoven with her own. But beyond making an appeal to the interest of the general reader, China provides an unusual field for the enterprise of the merchant and manufacturer; while the commercial and industrial ambitions of Japan invite from them the most careful consideration and the most serious study. Need it be added that in the daily moves and counter-moves of these, the two great forces which give to the term "Far East" its present undeniable significance, the politician will find unending and absorbing material for study and speculation.

Generally speaking, volume i. will be found to appeal more especially, though by no means exclusively, to those who find pleasure in following a narrative of travel in unfamiliar

and unbeaten tracks, since thirteen of its eighteen chapters are devoted to a description of my journey across the interior of China. The exceptions are chapters i., iv., xii., xvii., and xviii., which deal with various matters as follows: chapter i., with the positions of Japan and China in the Far East respectively, and with the contrast which they present; chapter iv., with the much-debated question of the navigation of the middle reaches of the Yang-tsze river; chapter xii., with the intricacies of the opium question; and chapters xvii. and xviii., with the building of the frontier between Burma and the Chinese Empire.

On the other hand, volume ii. is composed mainly of a series of essays upon subjects of more especial interest to those who are themselves personally interested, either directly or indirectly, in the development of Far Eastern affairs—the student, the politician, the financier, the merchant, and the manufacturer. Of the thirteen chapters composing this volume, nine are devoted to a critical examination of Japan's place in the Far East.

In such an examination narrative of travel finds but little place, the bulk of the space at my disposal being required for more serious discussion. The remaining four chapters—chapters xix.-xxii.—are concerned with such matters as the present attitude of China towards Europe, and with the existing state of the commerce and communications (railways) of the Empire, some indication also being given as to their probable future development. Here again a description of travel finds no place.

The greater part of what is here published sees the light of day now for the first time. In one or two places, however, I have availed myself of the permission granted me by the proprietor of 'Blackwood's Magazine' and by the editor of 'The National Review,' to make use of matter which has already appeared in the columns of their respective publications. To these gentlemen my grateful acknowledgment is due.[1] The illustrations are in

[1] It should, perhaps, be added that at the time when I was writing for 'The National Review,' I had reasons for desiring to preserve my anonymity. Hence my contributions to that periodical appeared over the signature of "Dalni Vostock." They were three in number, and appeared in its issues of September 1906, November 1906, and April 1907.

every case, with the single exception of the frontispiece, reproductions of photographs taken by myself, and the map which accompanies volume i. has been specially prepared by Mr Edward Stanford under my own personal direction and supervision.

It would not be possible to make individual mention of all those to whom I am indebted for assistance and information. I should like, however, to place on record my gratitude to the large number of Japanese manufacturers who so courteously conducted me over their mills and workshops, as well as to many Japanese gentlemen—official and non-official—in the capital and elsewhere, for their kindly interest and hospitality. I was especially fortunate in being given the opportunity of discussing questions of public interest with Prince Ito and Count Okuma in Japan, and with his Excellency Yuan Shikai in China. To Sir Claud Macdonald, H.B.M. Ambassador at Tokyo, my thanks are especially due for the ready help which he accorded me in carrying out my investigations in Japan; and I am likewise indebted to Sir John Jordan, H.B.M. Minister at Peking, for an equal readiness to

grant me assistance while in China. Among the many other officials of H.B.M. Diplomatic and Consular Service to whom I am indebted, mention must especially be made of Mr H. Bonar, H.B.M. Consul-General at Kobe, whose valuable companionship I was fortunate enough to secure in many of my expeditions to the chief centres of Japanese industrial activity; of Mr H. H. Fox, H.B.M. Consul at Ichang, Mr H. Goffe, H.B.M. Consul-General at Ch'êngtu, and Mr W. H. Wilkinson, H.B.M. Consul-General in Yün-nan, to all of whom I am indebted for both help and hospitality. I also received valuable aid from many unofficial residents in the Far East—from Captain Brinkley in Tokyo, and from Dr Morrison, Mr Gardiner, and Mr J. O. P. Bland in Peking, as well as from many members of the British mercantile community resident in Shanghai, Hankow, and Tientsin, and from the officials of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Nor must I omit to mention the kindness of the many members of the Missionary Societies with whom I came into contact in many parts of the Chinese Empire.

In such different towns as Mukden, Niu-chwang, Ch'ung-k'ing, Ch'êngtu, Chia-ting Fu, Sui Fu, Chao-t'ung Fu, Tung-ch'uan Fu, Yün-nan Fu, and Tali Fu, I encountered members of the missionary community, from all of whom I received a cordial hospitality and much valuable information.

RONALDSHAY.

October 1908.

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PART I.

A NEW ORDER IN THE FAR EAST

"We have also to include in the definition of Central Asia the Western territories of the Great Empire of China, that mysterious and inscrutable dominion which in its age is never old, in its decay is never feeble, and in its revolutions is never scattered. In the examination of the Chinese problem alone there is sufficient material to occupy attention for a great number of years."

—LORD CURZON of Kedleston: *Speech to the Members of the Central Asian Society, May* 20, 1908.

"It is time to drop the licence of exaggeration, and, with the light of common day, yet with sympathy and without prejudice, seek to know what Dai Nippon is and has been."

—W. E. GRIFFIS, A.M.: *The Mikado's Empire.*

CHAPTER I.

A NEW ORDER IN THE FAR EAST.

THE passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth century has been marked by many events of immense importance to the human race. Many years hence historians will no doubt give their decision as to the relative importance of the various movements which have characterised the past decade, and which have provided the outward and visible signs of the mysterious onward flowing current—call it evolution or what you will—which is for ever sweeping peoples and kingdoms along the road to an unknown goal. It would be rash, indeed, to endeavour to anticipate the verdict of posterity, but this at least may be foretold, that no historian dealing with the closing years

of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth century will be able to minimise the vast importance to the world at large of the remarkable change which has taken place during that period in the relations between the peoples of the East and those of the West.

The whole outlook upon life of the people of Asia is undergoing a process of transformation: they are beginning to look to the future instead of dwelling in the past. The restless spirit of modern industrial competition is warring with the comfortable fatalism which has for centuries enslaved the men of the devout and contemplative East. Asia has always displayed a passionate reverence for the past, and it is not too much to say—of China at any rate—that she has existed for centuries in a state of voluntary bondage to the dead. The worship of *ancestors* has been the keystone of the religion of the races of the Far East, and throughout the Asiatic Continent the highest expression of the genius and art of her children is to be found in monuments raised to the memory of her illustrious dead—the Taj Mahal

at Agra, the tomb of Tamerlane at Samarkand, the beautiful mausolea of the Shoguns at Tokyo and Nikko.

But the chains that bind her to the dead are being loosened; with the spread of modern education are rising new thoughts and new ideals, her gaze is slowly being directed away from the immutability of the past to the possibilities of the future. A force of incalculable potentiality for influencing the destinies of the world has been given birth, and it is no longer possible to ignore the immense significance of the movement which, beginning in the extreme East, is sweeping back over Asia and leaving an indelible mark upon every country in its flight. Japan has already emancipated herself from the fetters of Oriental fatalism and inaction — with what startling results we already know. China stirs uneasily with the child national assertion in her womb. In India agitation seethes and bubbles and takes feverish hold of any weakness which the ruling Power displays. Persia, until recent years the home of the luxury and splendour, the pomp and pageantry, the unfettered and illimitable

egoism of an irresponsible and unchallenged absolutism, is even now in travail, with every prospect of giving birth to a deformed caricature of constitutional government. In Egypt the cry of nationality trembles in the air, while in Turkey the passage from autocracy to representative government has been effected with such bewildering rapidity, and with such an astonishing absence of friction, that it is difficult to grasp the fact that so unexampled and so unlooked-for a change has in very truth been brought about. From all quarters come indications that the Eastern question of the future is assuming a new phase, in which the rivalries and jealousies of European Powers are falling more and more into the background before the rapidly growing ambitions and aspirations of the Eastern races themselves.

It is in the Far East that this new movement has had its origin, and it is in the Far East that its progress may be most profitably studied, and it is to the countries of the Far East consequently—China, Korea, and Japan—that the pages that follow are almost exclusively restricted. The greater part of the

material used in their composition was collected in the course of thirteen consecutive months of travel, and a not inconsiderable portion of the whole is devoted to the narrative of a journey across China from the Pacific seaboard to the Burmese frontier.

My primary object, however, has been to give the public the results of my investigations rather than a mere description of the incidents of journeys which it has been necessary to undertake in order to carry such investigations through, and descriptive narrative of the greater part of the six or seven months spent in travelling over the less inaccessible regions of the Far East, such as North China, Manchuria, Korea, and Japan, has necessarily been omitted, or, where not altogether omitted, compressed to the narrowest possible dimensions. I propose, therefore, to take the opportunity provided by an introductory chapter to say a few words from the general point of view of the traveller in Far Eastern lands.

On first acquaintance it is, perhaps, the contrast which the lands of East Asia present to those of the Near East and Central Asia

that most forcibly strikes the traveller who is acquainted with those regions. In Japan abundant water and a humid atmosphere have clothed the country with a mantle of tropical luxuriance and created in the Eastern Sea a world of fragrant flowers and riotous vegetation, the very antithesis of the harsh outlines and sun-scorched deserts of Western Asia. Here is a land that is kissed, not scourged, by the sun. Here, too, the gentle and kindly nature of the people testifies to the peaceful influence of Buddhism, contrasting strongly with the fierce fanaticism of Western Asia inspired by the militant creed of Mohammed. The humble worshipper at the shrine of his ancestors, the æsthetic acolyte chanting with monotonous iteration the meaningless "Namu Amida Butsu" of the Buddhic liturgy, has little in common with the perfervid apostle of Islam: the intricate and ingenious architecture of the one contrasts markedly with the grand and simple conceptions of the other.

Nor is the difference of the two creeds of East and West Asia less marked in its effects upon the social life of the people. "You

A land that is kissed, not scourged, by the sun.

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should know," wrote Ser Marco Polo six centuries ago, "that the Tartars, before they were converted to the religion of the idolaters (*i.e.*, Buddhism), never practised almsgiving. Indeed, when any poor man begged of them, they would tell him, 'Go, with God's curse, for if he loved you as he loves me, he would have provided for you.'" Moreover, the stern law that in Mohammedan countries relegates one-half of humanity to a rigid and perpetual self-effacement behind the prison walls of the zenana, finds no counterpart in the tolerant code of Buddhism, and in town and country alike woman plays a prominent and conspicuous part in the daily life of the people. That the condition of woman has been vastly improved by the spread of Buddhist ideas is admitted even by members of the Christian missionary community, as instance the case of Father Bigaudet in Siam, who found in the Buddhist teaching a meritorious disapproval of polygamy, though he deprecated its culpable tolerance of divorce, in which respect he declared the habits of the people to be of "a damnable laxity."

Yet despite such dissimilarity of creed and setting, there is among the peoples of Asia a certain affinity of thought, certain kindred characteristics, observing which the stranger from across the seas may say, "This is the East." The unabashed indecency of the bazaars of Western and Central Asia finds its counterpart in the frank disregard of convention displayed in the country districts of Japan, where life and social intercourse proceed innocently, if immodestly according to Western canons, upon the assumption that though the serpent tempted, the woman did *not* eat of the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden. The woman gives suck to her child in the street, the village maid bathes in company with the village hodge, and these things present no cause for offence, because in the eyes of the people there is no offence in them. Again, if the traveller in Persia or Turkestan is brought into perpetual contact with an unyielding and irritating resistance to hurry, the wanderer in Far Eastern lands becomes early conscious of the fact that he is moving in a world where all thought and action are characterised chiefly by a profound and

imperturbable deliberation. Nor will it be long before old memories are revived with a vigour and force which surprise, until it be remembered that "memory, imagination, old sentiments and associations, are more readily reached through the sense of SMELL than by almost any other channel."[1] There are few villages in China, or in Japan at the season for manuring the crops, which do not recall the supreme efforts in this direction of Baghdad or Bokhara. Finally, East and West Asia alike vie with one another in proclaiming the existence of that strange and mysterious law by which it appears to have been decreed that among the peoples of the West alone shall the sanctity of TRUTH meet with respect or recognition.

Of this homogeneousness of atmosphere I have invariably been conscious when travelling in Eastern lands; and it was, perhaps, because a tolerably extended acquaintance with the men and manners of many Asian countries had taught me to accept it without question or reserve that certain symptoms of innovation struck forcibly upon my imagination as I

[1] The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table (O. W. Holmes).

travelled through the country districts of Japan. Schools presented a conspicuous feature in every corner of the country—not the schools dear to the literati of China or the mullahs of Islam, but modern, up-to-date, twentieth-century schools, where the knowledge and learning of the West is fast being imparted to the children of the East. I remember one day meeting a number of small boys returning from a village school in a district far removed from the influence of railways and big cities. On my approaching them they drew up to attention with military precision and bowed ceremoniously to me as I passed. I was somewhat puzzled to find a reason for this spontaneous display, and subsequently learned that the cause was to be found in the cut of my clothes. I was dressed after the manner of the West, and was therefore an object of respect. You ask why? Because the Japanese are the most sensitive people in the world; because the day has already dawned when much that is artistic and characteristic of real Japan must be sacrificed at the altar of progress; because Europeanisation is the fetich of the day; and because European clothes are

the hall-mark of progress and modernity in the gentlemen of New Japan. Is it not forbidden to the ladies of Japan to present themselves at Court in Japanese dress?

Nor is it only the boys that attend the schools in this year of grace 1908; for the schoolgirl in magenta *hakama*, with satchel and books in hand, walking blithely to the nearest academy, is the rule rather than the exception of to-day —and a vastly significant one in an Eastern country. And if we turn to statistics regarding education, we find that they more than confirm the deductions of casual observation. Thus in 1885, 77 per cent of the boys and 44 per cent of the girls of school age were attending school —figures which had increased twenty years later to 98 and 93 per cent respectively. During the school year 1905 (the latest for which figures are obtainable), £3,821,660 was spent on public education; and 5,841,302, or 96 per cent of the children, boys and girls combined, of school age were recorded as receiving elementary education.[1]

[1] The figures are taken from the Thirty-third Annual Report of the Minister of State for Education.

There is another, a powerful—perhaps a sinister—influence eating slowly but surely into the old communal life of the people,—the influence of modern industrial requirement. Already thousands of women and children are toiling wearily in factory and workshop, attending mechanically to the great steam-driven spindles and looms which are slowly but inexorably crushing the life out of the old family hand-machines on which were made the exquisite fabrics embodying the artistic soul of Japan. Unguarded and uncared for by a kindly legislation, their lot is far from being an enviable one. No factory acts grace the statute-book of Japan. "We have our duty before us," say the manufacturers, "to establish ourselves firmly upon the world's markets. Let us get our hold of them before we are tied and handicapped by Government interference." Such was the fervent aspiration which I heard breathed by more than one manufacturer,—an aspiration which would appear to have every chance of being fulfilled, since only so lately as August 1906 the Japanese Government refused an invitation to send

delegates to an international conference at Berne, held with a view to prohibiting night work by women, on the grounds that the state of the industries in the country did not admit of such interference.

True, the women and children may smile over their work as the casual visitor passes to and fro among the whirring creels or the crashing looms; but then the Japanese smile is an enigmatical thing, and, as has been written, "the Japanese can smile in the teeth of death, and usually does." One must know something of the possibilities of the Japanese smile if one is to appraise it at its true value. "At first it only charms, and it is only at a later day when one has observed the same smile under extraordinary circumstances—in moments of pain, shame, disappointment—that one becomes suspicious of it."[1] Some day the workers of Japan will rise and will demand for themselves the same rights and privileges already conceded to their fellow-workers of the West—but the day is not yet. Before that time comes Japan will have dispelled once and for all the illusion that she is

[1] Lafcadio Hearn.

a trifler in toy lanterns and paper fans, and will have vindicated her claim to be regarded as one of the manufacturing nations of the world.

Herein, then, we become conscious of a subtle change. Some new influence pervades the otherwise familiar atmosphere of the East. The presence of a new force makes itself felt, —a disturbing force, perhaps a dangerous force, but in any case a force fraught with fateful possibilities,—the force of national assertion, fostered by a growing desire among Eastern peoples for the liberty, the equality, the democratisation of the West, and rendered formidable by the acquisition of the applied sciences of Europe. As the true signification of the new signs and portents in the East dawns upon the mind, it gradually becomes clear that a new order of things is arising which is destined to give a new turn to the course of history and to provide the dominating element in the evolution of mankind during the twentieth century.

As the pioneer in the new movement, Japan presents at the present time a subject for

grave study. For her the past half-century has been one of violent and incessant change. From a period of stress and storm, when the land was racked by revolution and civil war from within and menaced with violent interference from without, has emerged the Japan of to-day,—a force utterly unsuspected and unforeseen, an Asiatic Power wielding with unexampled skill and precision the weapons and inventions of the collective genius of the West. What may be the psychic effect of such volcanic change upon the mind and thought of an Eastern people lies hidden from Western eyes deep down in the inscrutable soul of the race: this only may be affirmed without question or hesitation, that no one who has had the opportunity of coming into close contact with Government or people can fail to be deeply impressed with a sense of the growing ambitions of the people, or of the inflexible determination of those in high places to do everything in their power to assist them in bringing such ambitions to fruition. Forced in the teeth of their own determined and strenuous opposition to open

their doors to the world and to enter into the comity of Western nations, they came to a momentous decision, and having decided, picked up the gauntlet which had been thrown down with a rapidity which astonished the world, and plunged headlong, and with altogether unlooked-for success, into the arena of international rivalry and competition.

That they regard their victories in battle merely as a means to an end, and not as an end in themselves, must be evident to any one who has had the opportunity of making even a superficial study of the country. Nothing is more galling to the susceptibilities of the educated Japanese than to find themselves the object of erroneous supposition upon this point. "On what grounds," asks Baron Shibusawa bitterly, "did I meet with so warm a reception at the hands of the prominent men of the world?"—and he himself supplies the unpalatable reply: "The President of the United States praised Japan because of her military prowess and fine arts. Are not Germany, France, and England praising Japan up to the skies on the same ground? If the

warm reception I received abroad is based on the feeling that I came from a country known for its military exploits, I must confess that that reception is a death-blow to our hopes."[1]

The end, indeed, which the Japanese keep steadfastly in view is a far higher one than mere proficiency in arms, and does not stop short of political, diplomatic, commercial, industrial, and colonial equality with the first Powers of the Western world. That they have learned all that the West can teach them in the conduct of modern war few will be found to deny; but that they are capable of rising to the same heights in the war of commerce has yet to be revealed. It may well be doubted whether as a race they have the same aptitude for bearing aloft the flag of trade as they have for wielding the sword of war. Just as in China the military profession was despised and looked down upon by the people,—with what dire results the battlefields of 1894 soon showed,—so in feudal Japan the merchant classes were rated the lowest of the

[1] Japan by the Japanese.

community. It is true that many of the best men in Japan are now entering or have already entered the commercial lists, and are showing themselves worthy of the best traditions of the West; but it is equally true that the country is sending forth vast numbers of small traders who reflect only too clearly the status of their kind of pre-restoration days, and whose procedure in neutral markets is fast pinning to their country's traders the title of the pedlars of the East. Pedlary in itself may be an honourable trade, but pedlary fraught with petty fraud and supported by devices which debauch the commercial standards of the West, brings little but obloquy upon the country's name and fame, and provides an only too obvious cause for the enemy to blaspheme. "The barrier of a low morality," to make use of the words of Baron Shibusawa once more, "is by far stronger than that of bad laws"; and I hold that he is the better friend of Japan who makes candid confession of such shortcomings as are thrust within the radius of his view, rather than the plausible advocate who, by ignoring or denying all

faults, encourages the nefarious in their ways, and disseminates impressions which the cold and impartial evidence of fact is unable to sustain. When those who are responsible for the course and direction of Japanese progress succeed in inculcating in all classes a due sense of the immense value of an unimpeachable honesty in every branch of commercial intercourse, they will have succeeded in removing a serious stumbling-stone from the path which the nation is striving to pursue, and will have placed their country immeasurably nearer the attainment of the goal which they keep steadfastly in view.

Japan, then, has, with an astonishing rapidity, become a powerful force in the world's economy; but will the metamorphosis of Japan continue to be the only, or even the most significant, feature of the new order in the Far East? If commercial and industrial rivalry is more and more to take the place of the rude panoply of war — as who can doubt must be the case?—there are in China potentialities before which the possibilities of Japan pale into insignificance. Against an

area of 147,467 square miles in the case of Japan,[1] China can boast of territory not far short of 4,000,000 square miles in extent: against Japan's 49,000,000[1] of population, China can probably pit 400,000,000 souls. In the matter of natural resources there is no comparison between the two countries, as may be seen from a glance at the opening pages of the following chapter, in which I have given, in faint outline, some suggestion of the almost incalculable wealth of China in this respect. Moreover, just as the aptitude of the Japanese as a people is for war rather than for commerce, so the philosophy of the Chinese has condemned and despised the profession of arms and applauded the pursuit of more peaceful avocations. The Samurai is the archetype of the Japanese gentleman; Bushido—the Fighting-knight ways—the accepted code of his conduct and honour. "In early youth the Samurai was put to the task of bearing and daring. Boys, and girls also, were trained in a Lacedemonian fashion to

[1] Exclusive of Formosa and the Pescadores.

A link with the past.

endure privation of all kinds."[1] The Japanese, in short, are a fighting race who have scorned the haggle of the market and sworn fealty to the god of war. The character of the Chinese is in this respect the antithesis of the character of the people of Japan. "Tzu Kung asked for a definition of good government. The Master (Confucius) replied: It consists in providing enough food to eat, in keeping enough soldiers to guard the State, and in winning the confidence of the people.—And if one of these things had to be sacrificed, which should go first?—The Master replied: *Sacrifice the soldiers.*"[2] The high standard of commercial morality attaining in China is admitted on all hands, and their reputation for integrity in all matters appertaining to trade is in strong contrast to the ill odour in which Japanese traders are held among European merchants carrying on their business in the Far East. A German merchant told me that he frequently entered into contracts with Chinese merchants involving as

[1] Professor Inazo Nitobe. [2] The Analects of Confucius.

much as 50,000 dollars, without any written or signed document being made use of at all; and this is typical of commercial intercourse between Europeans and Chinese. The commercial class in China is composed of shrewd hard-headed business men, to whom the accumulation of wealth is as the breath of life, and these men are beginning to realise the magnificent prospects which are held out by the organisation of industry. Who will venture to assign a limit to the influence of a reorganised China, with free play given to the commercial and industrial instinct of the race, upon the position of the trading and manufacturing nations of the world?

The position which China must inevitably acquire some day will not be won with the same startling rapidity with which Japan pressed home her claims to the title of a first-class Power. There are too many factors which will war against the reconstruction of Chinese society and the Chinese State, and which will act as clogs upon the wheels of Chinese progress. Loyalty to and adoration of the Sovereign, which bind the people of Japan into a united

whole, is wanting in the case of China, for the scion of an alien race sits upon the throne of the Mings. The vast extent of Chinese territory is in itself a sufficient bar to rapid consolidation, either of interests or of aims; still more must the variety of race and of language war against the rapid evolution of a national movement towards a single goal. The practical man, then, while he does not lose sight of the possibilities of the future, will recognise that he has yet to deal with the present, and in those chapters in which I have attempted to deal with the trade and industry of China I have been careful to restrict myself to an examination of the facts as they are to-day, and to refrain from indulging in what can only be a speculative analysis of a more or less remote future. It is perhaps for this reason that there will not be found in the pages that follow quite so attractive an estimate of the prospects of Chinese trade, or of enterprise in China, as has sometimes been held out by those who have written upon the subject. The disadvantageous conditions under which the renovation of China is being brought

about has been kept steadfastly in sight, and due weight given to the improbability of sudden change. The startling rapidity of the development of Japan as compared with that of China is emphasised by a mere comparison of the respective amounts of their foreign trade. Thus in 1907 the foreign trade of Japan, with a population of under 49 millions, amounted to approximately 94¾ million sterling, or only 18 million less than the foreign trade of China with a population of 400 millions.[1] This is a fact of which many are unaware.

There are many other matters of interest connected with the Far East of which the general public in England are unaware, and which might be urged as an excuse for adding yet another to the by no means inconsiderable number of books already in existence upon the Far East. How many people are aware, for instance, that Hong Kong is the first shipping

[1] In 1898 the foreign trade of China amounted to £53,180,000, and that of Japan to £47,914,000. The figures for the year 1907 were—China £112,686,000, and Japan £94,619,022. It is interesting to observe that in the ten years the foreign trade of each country has approximately doubled.

port in the world,[1] or that in Peking there are eight postal deliveries daily? Nor is a lack of exact knowledge concerning the men and manners of the Far East peculiar to the general public. A pathetic display of ignorance on the part of his Majesty's Government in London is generally to be expected whenever Parliament is so ill advised as to meddle with Far Eastern affairs. Take, for example, the following question and answer between a private member of the House of Commons and a member of the Government, on June 25, 1906:—

"Sir H. Cotton asked whether the words 'Tremblingly obey' were only used in China in prohibitive proclamations, and not in proclamations purporting to make concessions?"

Mr Churchill—"The honourable member speaks with immense and exceptional authority on these questions, and I think that it is quite possible that what he says is correct. Speaking for myself, I should say that no commands

[1] The order of the chief shipping ports of the world varies from year to year. Hong Kong headed the list in 1905 with entrances and clearances aggregating 21,843,131 tons, and was fourth in 1896 with 19,833,666 tons, Antwerp heading the list on this occasion with an aggregate of 21,676,118 tons.

port in the world [illegible]
eight postal deliveries [illegible]
of exact knowledge [illegible]
manners of the Far East [illegible]
public. A [illegible]
part of his [illegible]
generally [illegible]
is so ill advised [illegible]
ern affairs. Take [illegible]
question and [illegible]
of the House [illegible]
the Government [illegible]

"Sir H. [illegible]
'Tremblingly [illegible]
in prohibitive [illegible]
clamations [illegible]

Mr Churchill [illegible]
speaks with immense and exceptional [illegible]
on these questions and I think that [illegible]
possible that what he says is correct [illegible]
ing for myself I should say that [illegible]

[1] The order of the chief shipping ports [illegible]
from year to year. Hong Kong headed [illegible]
entrances and clearances aggregating 21,843 [illegible]
fourth in 1896 with [illegible] tons. Antwer[illegible]
on this occasion with an aggregate of 21,[illegible]

should be addressed to law-abiding citizens which they cannot obey without trepidation."

The solemn spectacle of a member of Parliament speaking with "immense and exceptional authority on these questions" inviting a member of the British Government to enter into a serious discussion as to the merits or demerits of a formal phrase commonly attached to official proclamations in China, would be distinctly humorous if it was not so pathetic. What was merely pathetic became deplorable when it was asserted in the House of Commons a few days later that, as a result of the above discussion, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had given instructions for the issue of an amended proclamation for the benefit of the Chinese coolies in South Africa, in which "all minatory and hortatory sentences would be omitted"! Displays of this kind do not tend to heighten the respect in which Governments whose responsibilities are world-wide are, or ought to be, held.

This, however, is a digression, though it serves to show the extent of the ignorance

concerning the Far East of those who ought to know better.

To sum up. The twentieth century has lifted the curtain on a Far East presenting for solution problems of unparalleled magnitude and of incalculable importance to Europe and America. Two nations are engaged in rough-hewing the destiny of Asia. Japan, a conquering and colonising nation, is engaged in a grim endeavour to become an industrial and commercial Power: China, the home of a peace-loving, trading people, is groping blindly after proficiency in arms. If the Japanese are successful in cultivating in the fighting classes a love and aptitude for commerce, without at the same time impairing their fighting qualities, then it may be predicted that, despite the comparative poverty of their natural resources, they will become a great people; but it is worth remembering that up to the present time the history of the world can provide no example of an Eastern race which has found it possible to cultivate in the *same class* both the love of commerce and the love of fighting. As far as the Chinese are concerned, it will prob-

ably prove sufficient for their purpose if they are successful in organising a fighting machine sufficiently powerful, in reputation and in fact, to make it unworth the while of other nations to attack them. With the advent of the present century the partition of China among the Powers has passed from the realm of practical politics, and formal record of her policy of preserving the integrity of the Chinese Empire has been registered by Great Britain in her latest treaty of alliance with Japan. The scheme for the reorganisation of the Chinese army, which has been described by European military experts as being, as far as its paper provisions are concerned, above criticism, provides for an army of 36 divisions of 12,000 men each (432,000 men) by the year 1917. There are at the present time at least 100,000 troops drilled and equipped on modern lines, and though their fighting efficiency is impaired by the fact that they are armed with divers patterns of rifles — Japanese, Mauser, and Mannlicher — and Japanese, Krupp, and Kreusot guns, and that some at least of the necessary accessories of war exist on paper

only,[1] yet even now they present a sufficiently formidable force to prevent any one from lightly taking up arms against them. I do not believe in the existence of a Chinese army for purposes other than those of securing the nation against undue interference with its internal affairs at the hands of foreign Powers.

The questions discussed in the following chapters are consequently those of the development of China under the new conditions which recent years have brought, and especially the construction of railways, since this is at the present time the chief instrument which is being employed in opening up the country; of the prospects of future trade between China and Great Britain, with special reference to the provinces of Western China; of the settlement of frontier problems arising out of the juxtaposition of China with British Burma; of the politico-moral problem arising out of the opium traffic; and finally, of the future of Japan as a

[1] At the much boomed manœuvres of 1905, for instance, an inquisitive visitor found the dressing-station useless owing to the fact that it possessed no bandages.

Great Power in the Orient. Let me, however, before entering upon the more serious discussion of such matters, invite the reader to accompany me upon a journey across the heart of the Chinese Empire.

PART II.

ACROSS THE HEART OF CHINA

"The principal advantage of travel must be the opportunity which it affords us of becoming acquainted with human nature; knowledge, of course, chiefly gained where human beings most congregate—great cities and the courts of princes: still, one of its great benefits is that it enlarges a man's experience, not only of his fellow-creatures in particular, but of nature in general. Many men pass through life without seeing a sunrise; a traveller cannot."

—LORD BEACONSFIELD.

"Through the midst of this great city [Ch'êngtu] runs a large river. It is a good half-mile wide, and very deep withal, and so long that it reaches all the way to the Ocean Sea—a very long way, equal to 80 or 100 days' journey. And the name of the river is Kian-suy. The multitude of vessels that navigate this river is so vast, that no one who should read or hear the tale would believe it. The quantities of merchandise also which merchants carry up and down this river are past all belief. In fact, it is so big that it seems to be a sea rather than a river!"—*The Book of Ser Marco Polo.*

CHAPTER II.

SHANGHAI TO ICHANG.

SHANGHAI is an example of one of the curious anomalies which have been generated by the collision of Western progress with Eastern stagnancy. It presents, indeed, an astonishing phenomenon, a European city—not unfit to be the capital of many a European country—dumped down on a Chinese mud-flat. The mud-flat is still the property of China, who receives ground-rent from the foreigner who has spread his palatial mansions over it; but beyond receiving this consideration she has little say in the management of the settlement, which entrusts a municipal council with the conduct of its affairs. Shanghai is, in fact, an independent republic with a government of its

own, which treats all other authorities with whom it is brought into contact—Chinese provincial officials, foreign consuls, the legations at Peking—as so many external bodies to be met and dealt with upon terms of equality.

That it flourishes amazingly is a fact beyond dispute. Prosperity—arrogance the Chinese of to-day, flushed with his new-born spirit of nationality, would probably say—stares you in the face as you steam up the Whang-poo river lined with vast piles of modern architecture. Sir Henry Norman thought that at first sight Shanghai was superior to New York, far ahead of San Francisco, and almost as imposing as Liverpool itself. And it has increased prodigiously since Sir Henry Norman first cast his gaze upon it. At that time there were barely 5000 foreign residents; now there are upwards of 17,000. The first five years of the twentieth century saw an immense impetus given to the settlement, the foreign population nearly trebling itself in that time. Values have gone up in a way well calculated to delight the heart of the speculator in land. Plots on the river-

A street in Shanghai.

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front which were sold at fifty or sixty dollars a *mow* in the early days when the first committee of roads and jetties was formed (1844), are worth as many thousands to-day. It is estimated that Great Britain alone has here vested interests of the huge value of £250,000,000.

The astute business man of China soon realised the advantage of living under equitable government, and, contrary to the intentions of its founders, flocked into the settlement. To-day the Chinese lady, decked in her most splendid satins and silks, may be seen driving in her smart victoria along Bubbling Well Road, while the Chinese gentleman bowls gaily along in his latest pattern motor-car from Europe. With this influx of Chinese into the republic, the question of courts of law for so mixed a community, accustomed to codes of law so widely divergent as those of China and Europe, presented itself for solution, and gave rise to the establishment in 1863 of a "Mixed Court" for the trial of Chinese in cases in which foreigners were involved, the Chinese magistrates being assisted in their functions by

a foreign assessor. Out of a dispute between the municipality and the Chinese magistrates of the "Mixed Court" as to the custody of certain prisoners, there arose in December 1905 a riot known to history as the "Mixed Court" riot. Perhaps increasing sensitiveness on the part of the Chinese at the glaring success of the foreigner at his gates was to some degree responsible for this upheaval, which necessitated the landing of blue-jackets and marines. If that be so, the most interesting outcome of the trouble is to be found in yet one more anomaly, in strict keeping with the anomaly provided by the existence of Shanghai itself—namely, the creation of a Chinese volunteer corps upon European pattern, which has, at its own request, sought to be embodied in the foreign corps. Thus does China and non-China combine and interact under foreign governance upon Chinese soil.

The importance of Shanghai as a commercial port is sufficiently demonstrated by a glance at its trade returns. In 1906 its shipping (inward and outward) aggregated 17¼ million tons, while the gross value of its trade was

421,956,496 *Hk. Tls.*, equivalent to £69,500,000. It is, indeed, a vast commercial emporium at which the products of European and American factories are first collected before being distributed to the consumers of China, and for this very reason it is not here that the would-be investigator will find material for forming a just estimate of the future of China, commercial, industrial, or political: Shanghai, in other words, is not China, it is an exotic which flourishes because it is not subjected to Chinese conditions. To form any adequate idea of China, the inquirer must leave the foreign settlements which dot the coast-line and travel into the interior of this vast empire. There he may observe for himself the manner of life of the real Chinese,—the teeming millions who live the immemorial life of China, as distinct from the men of the coast, who rub shoulders daily with peoples thinking other thoughts and observing a different mode of life from themselves. He will live among the Chinese people and learn for himself the nature of their requirements, and their ability or otherwise to satisfy them. He will come into contact, to

put the case into the phraseology of the economists, with the outstanding features of Chinese demand and supply, and he will be enabled to form some idea of the probable and possible demand of the Chinese for commodities which they cannot themselves supply, and of the extent of their purchasing capacity.

Nowadays, too, he will come into contact with a new belief,—new, that is to say, as far as China is concerned,—the belief of a people in a national destiny. In the treaty ports much may be heard of a new China, but much that is met with in the treaty ports is mere froth and bubble; and to be real, the spirit of regeneration must be found moving among the *people*, in the villages and in the country towns hidden away from the eye of Europe in the dim recesses of the inland provinces, severed from the outer world by hundreds and even thousands of miles of medieval communications — unimaginable cart roads and tortuous coolie tracks. If new forces are found stirring the quiet and stagnation which for centuries have brooded over these back-waters of the great onward-flowing current of the world's

progress, then we may begin to view the problems presented by a renovated China in the light of problems at last within the range of the practical, and destined to have immense influence upon our own future. And when we have grasped something of the significance of the movement, and realised — to quote the words of Dr Martin — that "its object is not a changed dynasty nor a revolution in the form of Government, but that, with higher aim and deeper motive, it promises nothing short of the complete renovation of the oldest, most populous, and most conservative of Empires," then we may face with all the seriousness which the case demands the gigantic possibilities which are opened out in connection with the future relations of East and West. When we begin to sum up the assets of China,—its 400,000,000 of frugal and industrious people, its incalculable mineral wealth scattered bounteously over a compact territory nearly half as large again as the United States of America, its variety of soil and climate, its immense rivers and vast sea-board,—we need not feel surprised if the mind is staggered at the thought of

what a regenerated China may mean to posterity.[1] Even the present generation will see

[1] On May 13, 1908, President Roosevelt, in a powerful speech at a conference of the Governors of the States of the Union, denounced the prodigality with which the wealth of natural resources of the United States was being squandered. I extract a single sentence only: "We began with coal-fields more extensive than those of any other nation and with iron ores regarded as inexhaustible, and many experts now declare that the end of both iron and coal is in sight." Contrast with this state of affairs the case of China. Here natural resources, immensely greater in all probability than those of the United States, are being sedulously hoarded up for a future generation. Baron von Richthofen has spoken with authority upon the mineral deposits of China. Again let me give but a single quotation: "I was not a little surprised to find the southern half of the province [Shansi] . . . constituting one great coal-field of incredible wealth; . . . and besides, the seams accompanied by beds of excellent iron ore in abundance, and a variety of clays fit for many technical purposes. . . . All the conditions required for enhancing the value of a coal-field are here combined in such a remarkable manner as to make the extraction of a very superior coal easier and cheaper than in any other known instance. . . . And the quantity of coal available for this cheap extraction is so large, that at the present rate of consumption the world could be supplied from south Shansi alone for several thousand years." (See 'Ocean Highways,' New Series, vol. i. p. 314.) At Ta Yeh, to give but one other example of the enormous mineral wealth of the empire, stands a mountain of iron ore 3 miles long and 400 feet high, capable of supplying 700 tons of iron a-day for a thousand years. Yet we find "worn-out London horse-shoes coming out

vast changes in East Asia, and it was with my mind full of such thoughts as are suggested by considerations of this kind that I started on a journey which was to take me into the very heart of China, up the swelling bosom of the mighty Yang-tsze, into the recesses of the wide-stretching and wealthy province of Ssŭch'uan, across the bleak highlands of Yün-nan, and out, finally, on the far side, through the tropical swamps and jungles of British Burma. Let me invite the reader whose interest is sufficiently aroused to accompany me.

One steals away from Shanghai at some indefinite hour in the dead of night, and when one wakes up in the morning the great buildings of the busy bustling commercial metropolis are lost to sight, and on all sides the waters

12,000 miles by sea and then journeying inland within a stone's throw of the greatest iron ore deposits in the world, there to be sold at high prices because a working plan without restrictions has not yet been found by which to drive a little way into the bowels of mother earth." (See 'The Truce in the Far East and its Aftermath,' by Mr Putnam Weale, p. 405.) Sooner or later the "working plan" now lacking will be found, and when this comes about it is difficult to see what is to prevent China from becoming the greatest industrial country in the world.

of the Yang-tsze roll voluptuously in turbid yellow flood towards the sea, between low and scarcely perceptible banks ten miles apart. You may spend an unprofitable morning in guessing at the number of cubic feet of muddy water which pass by you every second, for little else will suggest itself to any one relying upon his external surroundings to set in motion his train of thought; and when you are tired of guessing, you may look up the answer in Mr Little's encyclopædic dissertation upon the Yang-tsze,[1] and marvel at the divergence between your own estimate and the 1,000,000 cubic feet which you learn is the volume of water brought down per second at Hankow, 600 miles farther up, in the month of June. There is a story to the effect that when a certain English monarch threatened to remove his presence from London as a mark of his royal displeasure, the mayor and corporation made bold to express the hope that, when removing his court and his presence, he would vouchsafe to leave them the Thames. Yet, compared with the Yang-tsze, the Thames is a

[1] 'Through the Yang-tsze Gorges,' by Mr A. Little

veritable stream, and can boast of a discharge at London of but $\frac{1}{244}$ of that of the Yang-tsze 1000 miles from the sea.

The afternoon provides some mild excitement, for the channel narrows down to little more than half a mile, and from the summits of a low range of hills on the right bank a dozen or more heavy guns frown grimly down upon the waters. We are passing the well-known fortified position of Kiang Yin, to which China looks in the day of trouble to guard the great artery leading to the heart of her empire. Beyond Kiang Yin the river widens out once more, and the sun sets in a blaze of glory behind an uninterrupted rim of level land.

Early on the second morning Nanking is reached. Little of the city is to be seen from the river except the inevitable stone wall, which here comes down within a short distance of the river's edge, and a not altogether attractive-looking excrescence between the city wall and the river bank, due to the advent of the foreigner and his trade. Another foreign innovation is on its way—namely, the railway which is being pushed forward from Shanghai by the

British and Chinese Corporation, and which may be expected to arrive in another year's time.[1] In the meanwhile Nanking can show shipping entered and cleared aggregating close upon 4,000,000 tons.

In the course of the next thirty-six hours we pass the port of Wuhu with its thousand-year old pagoda, opened to trade in 1877; a second fortified bluff, by name Matung; a curious isolated rock rising abruptly from mid-stream with a monastery on its summit, and known as "The Little Orphan"; Hukow, a fortified position at the entrance to the Poyang lake; and on the evening of the third day draw up at the treaty port of Kiukiang, celebrated locally for pottery and silver ware, and enjoying the unenviable reputation of being the hottest of all the Yang-tsze ports. The following morning the houses and factories of Hankow rise on the horizon, and by midday we are landing on the magnificent shaded esplanade which runs along the river's edge the whole length of the British, French, and German concessions. A short time previously I had the opportunity of seeing something of Hankow, which vies with

[1] This line is now completed and open to traffic.

The river front at Hankow.

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Tientsin for the position of second commercial city of the empire, and is deserving of passing notice.

In more ways than one Hankow is a remarkable town. It is, according to the members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission, "the greatest centre of distribution in the empire." Its position is certainly unique. Situated at the junction of the Han river with the Yang-tsze, 600 miles from the coast, it is nevertheless visited by ocean-going steamers at certain seasons of the year, and is at all times in communication with Shanghai and the sea through the medium of a perfect flotilla of river steamers of considerable speed and size.[1] It is at the

[1] The following list of steamships plying exclusively upon the Yang-tsze at the present time will give some idea of the vast proportions which river navigation may be expected to assume when China becomes a modern industrial nation :—

I. SHANGHAI—HANKOW.

The China Merchants Steam Navigation Co.	5	large	steamers.
Messrs Butterfield & Swire	4	"	"
Messrs Jardine, Mathieson, & Co. . .	4	"	"
(The above three companies form a shipping combine.)			
The Osaka Shosen Kwaisha (Japanese) .	4	"	"
The Nippon Yusen Kwaisha (Japanese) .	3	"	"
A French company	3	"	"

present time the terminus, and in the future will be the central point, of a great trans-Chinese railway running from Peking to

The Nord-Deutcher Lloyd	3 small steamers.
The Hamburg Amerika	2 " "
Geddes & Co. (Chinese owned but flying the British flag)	2 " "
Ramsay & Co. (Japanese)	2 " "
A French company	1 " "
Total . .	33 steamers.

II. HANKOW—ICHANG.

The China Merchants Steam Navigation Co. .	2 steamers.
Messrs Butterfield & Swire	1 "
Messrs Jardine, Mathieson, & Co. . . .	1 "
The Osaka Shosen Kwaisha (Japanese) .	2 "
Total . .	6 steamers.

III. HANKOW—CHANGSHA.

Messrs Butterfield & Swire	1 steamer.
Messrs Jardine, Mathieson, & Co. . . .	1 "
The Hunan Co. (a Japanese company receiving a subsidy of 6 per cent on its capital) . . .	3 "
Total . .	5 steamers.

From the above table it will be seen that there are at present forty-four steamers plying exclusively upon the waters of the Yang-tsze. In addition to these, the Nippon Yusen Kwaisha and the Osaka Shosen Kwaisha each run two steamers from Yokohama to Hankow, and the number of sailing junks upon the river is incalculable.

Canton. Railway travelling in China is, generally speaking, still a novelty where it exists, which is the exception, and an as yet scarcely felt desideratum where it does not, which is the rule; yet I have quite recently traversed the 800 miles between Peking and Hankow in little more than thirty-six hours, crossing the huge expanse of the formidable Yellow river by a bridge little short of two miles in length, in a train which might have been the Orient express hurrying from Paris to Constantinople, but for the presence of pig-tailed attendants speaking a dozen words of pidgin English and half as many of unintelligible French. The concession being nominally Belgian, and in reality largely French, some attempt has been made to bring that language into use upon the line. But the Chinese have ideas of their own as to the relative value of foreign tongues, and it is a curious fact, noticeable throughout the empire, that whereas a Chinese will pay to learn English, he will seldom take lessons in other languages free.[1] Finally, Hankow is the largest city

[1] In the Peking University, where instruction in one foreign language is obligatory, I found upwards of 300 out of the total

between Shanghai and Ch'ung-k'ing, and occupies a commanding position upon the greatest of all the avenues of approach to the vast regions of Western China.

It is perhaps superfluous to add that its unique situation was not lost upon the pioneers of British trade, and that for upwards of forty years the lordly houses and residences of British merchants have formed a conspicuous and familiar object in the landscape. With a facility which continental Europe has always shown for following in the wake of British pioneers, Russia, France, Germany, Belgium, and Japan have appeared successively upon the scene, and have each at the present time their own concession. These, with the huddled agglomeration of native buildings on the left banks of the Han and the Yang-tsze rivers, constitute one section of a triple town. On the right bank of the Han lies Han Yang, the playground of a Viceroy's industrial ambition; and across the mile-wide channel of the Yang-tsze stands Wuchang, the

number of 500 students learning English. In one class I found the students engaged in composing an essay on education in English.

site of the yamens of the Viceregal court and of a series of modern manufactories imported wholesale from the West. Hankow is further remarkable as the scene of a slowly awakening movement in favour of modern industrial methods, and as the capital of the famous Viceroy Chang Chih Tung.

To Chang Chih Tung is undoubtedly largely due the industrial activity of the place. Arsenal and powder factory, mint, steel works and cotton mills, silk filatures, silk-weaving and grass-cloth establishments, all owe their existence to official inspiration; while private enterprise is represented by the famous brick-tea factories, a glass furnace, flour mills, and cotton-pressing establishments. Of these, the cotton mills and other textile industries have recently been freed from the burden of official management by passing into the hands of a business syndicate at a rent of 100,000 *taels* a-year,—a change which has proved of conspicuous advantage to the industry. About 40,000 spindles and 500 looms were at work in the cotton mills when I visited them; and though the workers here were all men and boys, the

employment of women "being thought by the Viceroy to be against good morals and Confucian principles," the greater expense of male labour seems to have been no obstacle to the success of the enterprise, the output for 1905 being 164,930 pieces of shirting and 100,000 cwt. of yarn, and the profits 25 per cent,[1]—a significant indication of the potentialities of Chinese industrial undertakings when run on business lines. I noted as a curious fact that the danger to be apprehended from departing from "good morals and Confucian principles" is not apparently so great in a silk filature as in a cotton mill, since in a silk factory next door the hands employed were almost exclusively women and girls.

The steel works at Han Yang are in a state of transition, and present at one and the same time an example of the impulsive and headstrong character of the Viceroy and of the movement in the direction of industrial reform. Having decided that he would make his own rails, his Excellency lost no time in issuing orders for the establishment of steel works.

[1] Consular Report on the Trade of Hankow, 1905.

In vain it was pointed out that in order that the contractors might decide upon the process best suited to the raw material, samples of the iron ore to be used should be secured and analysed. The Viceroy is one of those men who, in the words of an educated Chinese, "when he set his heart upon some new idea, expected his whole scheme to drop ready-made from heaven," and curtly informing the contractors that the quality of his iron ore was no business of theirs, demanded the despatch of a complete steel plant without further delay. The contractor guessed, since there was nothing else to be done—and guessed wrong. When the ore came to be treated, it was found to contain large quantities of phosphorus, a type of ore which is not amenable to the Bessemer process. After a large number of faulty rails had been supplied for the Pei-Han (Peking-Hankow) railway, the present manager, Mr Li, was sent to Europe to purchase a new plant, and the changes now in progress are the outcome of his recent visit. At a cost of 2,500,000 *taels* a new blast furnace, Siemens-Martin furnaces, rolling mills, and beam and

angle plant are already being set up, and it is estimated that before long the furnaces will be turning out from 400 to 450 tons of pig-iron a-day, while the rolling mills will be capable of dealing daily with from 800 to 1000 tons of steel to allow of future expansion in the furnaces. Rails, ship plates, and steel girders will constitute the output, and a Lloyd's inspector is to be engaged to pass and register the plates. Mr Li has even visions of invading the preserves of Pittsburg, since he is of opinion that his girders, carried in ships on their homeward voyage after discharging American lumber and petroleum in China, can be landed at San Francisco at prices comparing favourably with those of the great steel metropolis of the United States. In the matter of raw material Hankow is abundantly blessed. At the coal mines of Ping Shan, coke equal to the best Durham is made at the pit's mouth; while at Ta Yeh, seventy miles down the river, stands a mountain of iron ore, giving 65 per cent of pure metal, 3 miles long and 400 feet high,—sufficient, according to the estimate of a European

engineer, "to turn out 700 tons of iron a day for 1000 years."

Quite recently a further instance of the imperious if ill-directed energy of the Viceroy had been given in a stupendous issue of copper coins. Having presumably accidentally stumbled upon Article II. of the Treaty of Commerce signed between Great Britain and China in 1902, by which China agrees "to take the necessary steps to provide for a uniform national coinage," he had with characteristic impetuosity seized time by the forelock and set all available machinery, not only in the *cash* and silver mints but even in the arsenal, to work upon the stamping of 10-*cash* pieces, whereby he succeeded in still further complicating the already inconceivably intricate currency of China by flooding the province in the course of a single year with three billion eight hundred and seventy-one million copper coins, the market value of which inevitably fell in proportion to the rapidity with which they were turned out. By the end of the year, when the central government had awaked to the danger of this reckless issue of depreciated

coin, it was found that there were some 2000 tons of copper still in stock, which had forthwith to be disposed of at a loss.[1]

It remains to add that the Viceroy is an ardent admirer of Japan. In the arsenal a staff of seventeen Japanese foremen have taken the place of the Germans who were formerly employed; a Japanese colonel, with staff of twenty Japanese military instructors, left Hankow while I was there to accompany the Viceroy's troops to the autumn manœuvres in Honan; while a river fleet of six gunboats and four destroyers are under construction in the shipyards of that country. Japanese were to be seen instructing and supervising in the textile factories, and the British consul-general reports that "the position of other nations is adversely affected by the anomalous favour felt for Japan, which renders that country's vigorous competition a very serious obstacle to any attempt to push our business relations with China. . . . Japanese hawkers have appeared in the streets of Wuchang, and the Japanese

[1] See Consular Report on the Trade of Hankow for the year 1905.

post office is about to open a branch there. Instead of the heated denunciation that such 'invasions of the interior' would have called forth had the perpetrators been Britons or other foreigners, the native papers record that the police received strict orders to watch over these enterprising persons, and laud the activity of the islanders in business."[1] Seven large Japanese firms are doing business in the city; three large new steamers are about to be put on the Yang-tsze by the Nippon Yusen Kwaisha,[2] the largest shipping company in Japan; of an estimated foreign population of 2500, it is said that 1000 are Japanese; and the Japanese concession, which has lain fallow for ten years, is now being taken vigorously in hand. Hankow, indeed, presents an admirable example of the prosecution of the rapidly growing ambitions and aspirations which are so conspicuous a feature of new Japan.

It would be impossible to leave Hankow

[1] Consular Report on the Trade of Hankow for the year 1905.

[2] These are included in the list of river steamers given on page 47.

without making mention of the brick-tea industry, more especially since at two other places only, Fuchow and Kiukiang, can a similar process be seen. At Hankow three Russian steam factories are engaged in pressing tea-leaf and tea-dust into bricks and tablets for the markets of Siberia, Mongolia, and Turkestan, at the rate of 20,000 tons a-year. It has been said that tea-dust also finds its way across the Pacific, where it fulfils the useful purpose of improving the colour—and inferentially the age—of American whisky; but then it has also been said by the ribald that soot is employed to perform a similar office for the tablets of Hankow tea.

Beyond Hankow the yellow waters of the great river stretch away westward like a ribbon, between low-lying plains cultivated with cotton. The resources of a river steamer are not great, and the lack of interest is doubly emphasised by the dull monotony of the landscape, broken only by the occasional graceful outline of argosies of white-sailed junks. We steamed uneventfully forward till the morning of the third day, when we found ourselves

Argosies of white-sailed junks.

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suddenly in shallow water. For some time we dodged backwards and forwards trying to find a channel, but our 2700 tons (gross tonnage) and our seven-foot draught proved too much, and when noon came and went and saw us still within half a mile of where we had been at eight o'clock in the morning, it became evident that we had accidentally discovered one of those places described by an ingenuous consul as "suitable only for ships drawing little or no water." That is one of the failings of the great river: its waters fall, and what is river one day may be paddy-fields the next. The river was falling now, and on all sides as the water receded the riparian population advanced, putting up flimsy reed huts and plunging recklessly into agricultural operations.

> "Sterilisque diu palus, aptaque remis,
> Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum."

Navigation under these circumstances is subject to rude surprises, and the very ship in which I had travelled to Hankow had most unexpectedly found herself constrained to spend a month

upon dry land during the previous winter, owing to a sudden fall in the river level. With that consideration and resource characteristic of the followers of the nautical profession, her captain took and despatched to the owners bi-weekly sets of photographs, "in order that they might see for themselves the steady progress made in the recession of the water." Fortunately on this occasion the steam launch which had been sent forward to explore, at last hit upon an eight-foot passage, and by evening we reached the port of Sha-shih, where, owing to further reports of shallow water ahead, we anchored for the night.

Sha-shih was opened to trade by the Japanese in 1896, but as far as foreign trade is concerned has proved a failure, its returns being the lowest but one of all the Yang-tsze ports. Japan holds a fair share of such trade as there is, and before leaving we discharged 1000 cases of Japanese sugar, seaweed, and yarn. But even the tenacity of the Japanese has given way before the stolid indifference of Sha-shih, only [illegible] that were established there [illegible] years ago still remaining, while

the Japanese steamship agency has fallen into Chinese hands; and a Government exhibition, founded with a view to advertising Japanese goods, has recently closed and its exhibits been sold off at auction. Even so, "*Made in Japan* is writ large on most of the cotton goods and fancy articles, lamps, umbrellas, and straw hats. The last-named head-gear is becoming very popular with all classes, and I was amused to discover that the fashionable hat of the season —a narrow-brim straw with highly coloured ribbon, obviously of Japanese make—bore inside the crown a device showing the British royal arms, and the not inappropriate motto, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense.'"[1] Sha-shih, however, manufactures a large amount of cotton cloth, 178,000 cwt. of which find their way yearly to the provinces of the West. It is made in three qualities, is the usual 14 inches in width, and sells at 1½d., 1¾d., and 2½d. a yard.[2]

From daylight on the 29th of October we steamed steadily up-river, the low-lying plains

[1] See Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, No. 3701: Trade of Sha-shih for the year 1905.

[2] Ibid.

giving place by the middle of the day to mountainous country, where pagodas appeared to crown almost every eminence, and clumps of bamboo and other evergreens enlivened the view; and at length at 10 P.M. we reached the head of steam navigation and anchored in mid-stream, flowing here with a six-knot current, between the pyramid-shaped peaks of the foothills of the mountainous country of the west, and facing the busy wharves and buildings of Ichang.

Chinese junks at Ichang.

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CHAPTER III.

THROUGH THE YANG-TSZE GORGES.

THE importance of Ichang lies in its being the port of transhipment between the coast and central China on the one hand, and the wide regions of Ssŭch'uan and Yün-nan on the other. "Here the results of modern invention in the shape of steel twin-screw steamers of over 1000 tons burden give place to medieval methods of transport as typified by the wooden junk with an average carrying capacity of 45 tons: here marine insurance begins and ends."[1] Here, too, the traveller will find a faint echo of the industrial activity of Hankow in the shape of a factory for the manufacture of cotton cloth

[1] Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, No. 3571: Trade of Ichang for the year 1905.

from Chinese yarn, consisting of fifty wooden hand-looms imported from Japan, and superintended by a manager of the same nationality.[1] But for the rest Ichang holds out no great attraction, and we lost little time in stowing our possessions into the two *kuadzas*, or three-room native passenger junks, kindly engaged for us by the British consul, and effecting a start. "We" consisted of two white men,—Mr F. W. Belt, an Australian who for many years had found wandering in many lands the most satisfactory method of—as he expressed it—killing time, and myself; two Chinese servants picked up by Belt at Hankow; Mr Chou, commonly known as "Joe," my faithful and accomplished interpreter; and Peter, my Chinese cook and body-servant, equipped to a remarkable degree with all the virtues and most of the vices common to his kind.

The passenger junk is a long, narrow, shallow-draught boat fitted with mast and sail. Aft a

[1] Additional machinery has since been imported from Japan —namely, a 15-horse-power engine, driving 40 looms and 150 foot looms. Japanese ginning machines are also in use, and are said to be finding a ready sale in every part of the country.

wooden cabin tilted up over the rudder constitutes the abode of the captain and his family. Immediately in front of this is a more or less open space for the men at the helm; next, in the middle of the boat, a long wooden deck-house divided into three compartments for the traveller; and finally, an open deck forward, which can be roofed over with matting at night, and which forms the scene both of the labours and the repose of the crew. My crew totalled twenty-three men,—the captain, of whom we were hard put to it to decide whether his mind or his language were the stronger; the helmsman, paid at the extravagant rate of 14,000 *cash* (about 30s.) for the voyage to Ch'ung-k'ing; a *tai-wan-ti*—*i.e.*, an individual whose duty it was to be ready at all times to jump out of his clothes and into the river to release the tow-rope when obstructed, paid from 6000 to 7000 *cash* (say 15s.); a ship's cook, who took a hand at the oars when not otherwise engaged; five boatmen always on board to handle the huge sweeps and stave the vessel off rocks with long, iron-shod, bamboo punting-poles; and finally, fourteen trackers, who toiled

from dawn to dark with scarcely an interval, and received the handsome reward of 4000 *cash* (about 8s. 6d.) for the journey, which might occupy anything from three weeks to a month. Could you want a better example of that class of men so common all over China "who are driven by the constant and chronic reappearance of the wolf at their door to spend their life in an everlasting grind"?

Trackers and boatmen alike are endowed with two remarkable characteristics—an invariable cheerfulness and good-humour in spite of their life of unceasing toil, and a colossal and ineradicable superstition. Hence the start on a voyage is celebrated with dramatic rites. The head of a sacrificial cock is ceremoniously removed, the blood is poured in libation over the vessel's bows, and amid the ascending fumes and smoke of many joss-sticks, the detonation of crackers, and the soul-stirring din of the inharmonious gong, the start is duly and propitiously made. Thus we placate the powers of evil that infest the waters of the great river, and set forth for the promised lands of the west.

The fame of the swirling races and majestic

The passenger junk on the Yang-tsze.

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gorges of the Yang-tsze is widespread. A mile or two above Ichang rise the mountain portals giving entrance to the first great gorge, and for ten days on end the traveller is borne through a wonderland of cliffs and towering pinnacles, where in some past geologic era whole mountain-ranges have been twisted and torn asunder by some terrific convulsion in the earth's surface. Nature has here assumed her grandest and most solemn garb. The pent-up waters race between sheer walls of towering rock; each turn in the winding course presents a fresh vista of magic grandeur. For us the sense of awe and gloom was emphasised by heavy masses of storm-cloud brooding over the mountain-tops and blotting out the light, while vegetation, growing wherever it found foothold among the rocks, and just assuming the vivid tints of autumn, gave colour to the scene and added by contrast to the sense of overwhelming immensity.

For the most part we are dragged by brute force against the current by the fourteen trackers at the end of a rope of plaited bamboo. When this is not possible the

whole crew scramble on board, throw themselves upon the huge sweeps, ten men to each, and screaming and shouting like pandemonium let loose, drive the boat slowly forward, the wild refrain of their songs harmonising with the stroke of the oars and echoing backwards and forwards between the encircling walls of rock. Sometimes when the trackers are on shore the tow-rope gets entangled in some intervening rock. The mate on deck leaps up and beats a wild tattoo on the ship's drum. The tow-rope immediately slackens, the deck crew, including the ship's cook, who have been perfectly quiet for an hour past absorbed in Buddha-like contemplation, or perhaps in slumber, spring up with a start, and becoming suddenly galvanised into an extravagant vitality, hurl themselves on to the sweeps with frenzied fury. They shout and shriek and stamp, all the while doubling themselves into extraordinary contortions, the cook especially, who by reason of the exaggerated slant of his eyes and eyebrows has a Mephistophelian appearance to start with, rapidly assuming the demoniacal

We are dragged by brute force against the current.

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appearance of a man possessed. When the obstacle which has been the innocent cause of all this disturbance is passed, peace descends once more, and the trackers tighten up the tow-rope and proceed as before.

The monotony of travelling thus for days together is broken by the variety of the scenery and the difficulty encountered in surmounting the rapids. At this time of year, when the water has fallen sufficiently to mitigate the force of the current and not enough to uncover the worst reefs, which are largely responsible for the danger of the rapids, all is more or less plain sailing. It is for this reason, perhaps, that those who have only a bowing acquaintance with the river have been led to underrate the difficulties of steam navigation. I encountered only one rapid that presented any difficulty, namely, the Yeh t'an, and even here we were hauled up easily with the aid of a couple of ropes and an extra fifty or sixty men. The state of the Yeh t'an, however, offered fruitful suggestion as to what the rapids can do, and it is worth noting

that Mr Little, whose acquaintance with the river is perhaps unique, affirms that at low water an ordinary *kuadza* such as I was travelling in would occupy six weeks between Ichang and Ch'ung-k'ing, or very nearly double the time actually taken by myself in November. On this point I shall have more to say in a later chapter. For the moment let me only remark that some insight into the peculiar construction of the Chinese mind may be gained by a careful observance of the immemorial methods of the boating population. I became quite absorbed on one occasion in watching a heavy junk struggling painfully up one of the lesser races, which are of frequent occurrence in certain stretches of the river. A long line had been laid out and hitched to a rock above the race. On deck a dozen men were yelling like fiends as they stumbled, slipped, and staggered in desperate endeavours to haul themselves up by the line. They would all seize hold of it, go through an exaggerated goose-step in execrable time, and as soon as they had a little bit in hand, make a desperate plunge with

it to a cross-beam amidships, where they would secure the few inches they had gained. This strenuous performance was then gone through all over again from the beginning, and the motion continued until they had at length dragged themselves to the top of the obstruction. Now the thought that not unnaturally occurred to me was, what a marvellous thing it is that in the whole course of the two or three odd millenniums during which the Chinese have been struggling with the navigation of the Yang-tsze, they have failed to evolve so simple a mechanical contrivance as a windlass! With the most primitive hand-winch a couple of men could have effected all and more than the dozen delirious maniacs in a quarter of the time, and at an expenditure of an infinitesimal fraction of the human force. It would be difficult to find a more striking example of that complete lack of imagination which has doomed China to a perpetual back seat among the competing Powers in the present advanced stage of the progress of humanity.

On the ninth day out from Ichang we

reached K'uei Fu, the first town worthy of the name that we had passed, built on the steep hillside of an open valley. Our struggle with the rapids and gorges proper is at an end; henceforth our way will lie along the bottoms of more open valleys, with only an occasional rapid here and there to interrupt our passage. K'uei Fu is of little concern to the British manufacturer. Some cotton yarn and coarse cotton cloth I saw, but the bulk of the shops appeared to be concerned chiefly with joss-sticks, native foodstuffs, a little local silver ware, and pawned goods. The yarn, I was told, came from the mills of Wuchang, and a query from one of my informants as to whether similar goods were produced in my country confirmed me in my opinion that the good people of K'uei Fu are not in the habit of trafficking in foreign goods. No wonder the members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission remarked, "Commerce, the subject of our report, scarcely exists until Wan Hsien is reached." If K'uei Fu does nothing else, it serves to throw a not insignificant light upon some of the

Nature has here assumed her grandest and most solemn garb.

causes of Chinese official opposition to foreign incursion. In the good old days K'uei Fu grew fat upon the proceeds of taxation imposed upon the river traffic, collecting, it is said, as much as 2000 *taels* (£300) a-day. With the opening of Ch'ung-k'ing to foreign trade these lucrative exactions were swept away, and *ichabod* is writ plainly over the dirt and squalor of the once opulent K'uei Fu.

Beyond this the scenery changes somewhat. The defiant rock walls of the gorges give place by degrees to less aggressive mountain slopes. Disintegrated sandstone colours the land with a warm, rich red; well-to-do looking farmsteads with gabled roofs and white-washed walls nestle among clumps of bamboo in pleasant hollows; and bright patches of sugar-cane and a variety of vegetables add to the general air of rural prosperity. All along the banks the poppy is being sown, which later on will cover the countryside with a mass of brilliant colour, showing bright against the background of brick-red earth and the dark-green leaf of the shady banyan.

On Nov. 11th we surmounted without diffi-

culty the "New Glorious Rapid" formed by a landslide in 1896, and though improved by the engineer, still a terror at low water, and the following day drew up at the district town of Wan Hsien. From here there is a road direct to Ch'êng-tu, the capital of Ssŭch'uan, and from here likewise mails are despatched direct to Peking. West to Ch'ung-k'ing, and from there on for another 250 miles to Sui Fu on the Yang-tsze, and on again for 100 miles to Chia-ting Fu on the Min, steam navigation is possible, this stretch of water providing a scene for the activities of his Majesty's gunboats posted at Ch'ung-k'ing. On the latest map of Ssŭch'uan, recently issued by the intelligence branch of the British War Office, Wan Hsien is singled out as an example of an open port. As a matter of fact it is nothing of the sort, and draws its stock of foreign goods almost exclusively from Ch'ung-k'ing. These consist of English shirtings and black and coloured *Italians* from Manchester, for which I was informed there was a fair demand, and fancy goods from Germany and Japan. Beyond

these, and in addition to the usual native wares, the products of local looms were on sale in the shape of cotton cloth and grass cloth for summer wear, and a fair stock of yarn from the mills of Wuchang. "In the town of Wan Hsien there are about 1000 hand-looms. The weavers are paid by the piece—about 30 feet long and 16 inches broad; this it takes an average weaver two days to weave, working from daylight to 9 P.M., and for this he gets 100 to 120 *cash* (2½d. to 3d.), being provided with food which may cost about 40 *cash* a-day; so that a weaver's wages may be put at 900 *cash* (1s. 6d.) per week of six days, in which time he would produce 112½ square feet of cloth."[1] When we take into consideration the difference in the price of labour between Manchester and Wan Hsien, and the heavy freights which Manchester goods are called upon to bear, to say nothing of the risks incurred, we see one of the reasons why the "millions of China," who are not infrequently held up by those whose too great enthusiasm

[1] Report of the Blackburn Commercial Mission.

outruns their reason, as the components of a prodigious market for British goods, are not unlikely to continue in the future, as in the past, to adequately supply their own demand.

From Wan Hsien to Ch'ung-k'ing proved a somewhat monotonous journey of ten days, through scenery that varied little in character and presented the same features — red hills terraced for cultivation, bamboos, banyans, wood oil-trees, sugar-cane, and vegetables— throughout. Here and there where outcrops of coal were visible in the hillsides, crude openings like the burrowings of brobdingnagian rabbits were to be seen, calling to mind the extraordinary antiquity of the practice of burning coal in China,—a practice which excited the interest and the admiration of Marco Polo, who informed his astonished readers on his return to Europe that "all over the country of Cathay there is a kind of black stones existing in beds in the mountains which they dig out and burn like firewood; . . . and they make such capital fuel that no other is used throughout the country." Examples of the primitive, however, become monotonous in China, and it was

not without satisfaction that, on the 22nd of November, I at last beheld the pagodas which herald the approach of a great city, and a little later tied up at the foot of the celebrated river port of Ch'ung-k'ing, romantically situated on a rugged spit of land jutting out between the Yang-tsze and Chia-ling rivers, and faced on the south by a range of wild and picturesque mountains. The first stage of my journey had been completed, and before me rose the steep and narrow thoroughfares and busy buildings of the commercial capital of the west.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROBLEM OF THE YANG-TSZE.

I PROPOSE dealing with the whole question of commerce and communications in later chapters; but it may not be amiss if, while the description of my journey up 1400 miles of the Yang-tsze is still fresh in the reader's mind, I touch upon the problem of its navigation. The importance of this question cannot be overrated, since the Yang-tsze provides at present almost the only means of communication between the outside world and a portion of the Chinese empire which has been described as bearing "about the same proportion to the prospective value of the yet undeveloped Sudan as does the wealth of the city of London to that of any ordinary

market town in England."[1] The time occupied in the transportation of merchandise from the coast to Ch'ung-k'ing is a factor of no little importance. Let me recapitulate the dates of my own journey. On October the 21st I left Shanghai. On October the 24th I reached Hankow, 600 miles higher up the river, and left again at midnight on the 25th, reaching Ichang, 400 miles beyond, at 10 P.M. on the 29th. On the morning of the 31st I re-embarked in a light passenger junk, and reached Ch'ung-k'ing after a quick passage on the afternoon of November 22nd. Time occupied between Shanghai and Ch'ung-k'ing, thirty-three days. When it is seen that at the most favourable time of year for effecting a quick journey a traveller cannot expect to cover the 1400 odd miles in less than a month, it will be readily understood that merchandise may occupy anything from six weeks to three months from the coast to the commercial gateway of Ssŭch'uan, according to the state of the water and the time of

[1] Sir T. H. Holdich, K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., C.B., in 'India' (The Regions of the World Series), p. 188.

year,—a matter of no small import to the people of the premier commercial and manufacturing nation.

But if delay in transportation proves a hindrance to commerce, high freights still further exaggerate the difficulty, and the freight charges ruling on the Yang-tsze are excessively high. Let me give examples. The freight recently paid on a ton (measurement) of English grey shirting from Shanghai to Ch'ung-k'ing was £5, 12s.—considerably more than double the freight paid on the same consignment from Manchester to Shanghai, and that on a *picul* (133⅓ lb.) of soda ash valued at 3 *taels* 55 cents at Shanghai, 1 *tael* 40 cents, or 40 per cent of its value. Again, "on a shipment of 600 boxes of soap the freight was *Tls.* 1225, and the insurance and other charges *Tls.* 486, making the cost of the consignment about 40 per cent of its original value";[1] and £1, 4s. was given me by a Chinese retail merchant as the cost of bringing a bale of cotton *Italians* from

[1] Report by the Commissioner of Customs at Ch'ung-k'ing, 1905.

Shanghai. Nor must it be forgotten that Ch'ung-k'ing is only on the threshold of the province. From here on, goods may have to travel several hundreds of miles farther by water, or be carried laboriously overland on the backs of animals or men. Thus, at Ch'êng-tu, the capital of the province, "the foreign resident has to pay 10 dollars 30 cents for a case of kerosene oil which in Hankow costs only 3 dollars 40 cents, and a 4-lb. tin of Hong Kong sugar, worth about 60 cents in Shanghai, cannot be had for less than 3 dollars 40 cents. In fact, the latter is sold here as a sweatmeat for some six *cash* a cube."[1] Such figures speak for themselves.

The pith of the particular question with which I am now concerned resolves itself into this—can transport by the Yang-tsze be expedited, and can the cost of such transport be reduced? In other words, is steam navigation between Ichang and Ch'ung-k'ing for commercial purposes possible? Statements have been made from time to time making

[1] Report on the province of Ssŭch'uan by Sir Alexander Hosie.

light of the difficulties lying in the way of steam navigation—statements with which I find myself quite unable to agree. The members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission ascended the stretch between Ichang and Ch'ung-k'ing in November, a time of year at which, as I have already pointed out, the real character of the rapids does not appear. Hence they reported that "the stretch between Ichang and Ch'ung-k'ing has been credited with a character which in the estimation of this mission is ill-deserved. . . . The terrors of the so-called rapids (*sic*) . . . arise more from ignorance of fact and circumstance than experience." And, again, Sir Robert Douglas in a recent publication declares that "repeated proposals have been made by foreigners to clear a passage, *as might easily be done* by the use of dynamite."[1] For myself, I prefer to accept the opinion of Captain Plant, at present pilot in the service of the French Government on the upper waters of the Yang-tsze, who can boast of ten years of practical experience of these waters, and who speaks

[1] 'Europe and the Far East,' p. 289. The italics are mine.

Official lifeboat on the Yang-tsze.

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eloquently of the "*enormous difficulties*" of the "chimerical schemes which have been put forward from time to time for the improvement of this part of the river." That steamers *can* surmount the obstacles was first proved by Mr Little, who ascended in a small steamboat called the *Lechuen* in 1898. The account which he has given of this pioneer voyage is interesting in the extreme. That the boat was towed by coolies up some of the worst rapids, and that the journey occupied eleven steaming days or, including deductions, three weeks in all, in no way detracts from the merit of that gentleman's enterprise. "It was," as Mr Little himself points out, "a first experiment, which could not be hurried; it was, for necessary reasons, made at a season when the rapids were at their worst, and it was made with a vessel of insufficient power;"[1] and it was followed a year later by a second ascent in the *Pioneer*, a boat built on a larger and more powerful scale, which may claim to be the first vessel which ever made her way from Ichang to Ch'ung-k'ing under her own steam.

[1] 'Through the Yang-tsze Gorges.'

A German endeavour to follow her example met with disaster, the boat being wrecked and her captain drowned; but since 1900 the passage has been made with increasing frequency and success by one French, one German, and three British gunboats, the most modern of which, H.M.S. *Widgeon*, steamed from Ichang to Ch'ung-k'ing in under six days, or just over forty-seven steaming hours. Germany, whose earlier efforts were crowned with disaster, did not succeed in reaching Ch'ung-k'ing until May 1907, when the gunboat *Vaterland*, which I found at Ichang waiting for a favourable opportunity to make a start, was successful, leaving Ichang on April 16th, and reaching Ch'ung-k'ing in nineteen days.

Nevertheless, the fact that light-draught steamers with powerful engines (leaving little or no room for cargo) can ascend the river at favourable times of the year is no proof whatsoever that they could be run as a commercial success. The mere fact that since Mr Little disposed of the *Pioneer* to the British Government in 1900 no further attempt in this

direction has been made, points rather to a conclusion in an opposite sense; and indeed, to quote the opinion of Captain Plant once more, these attempts to run commercial steamers, "abortive as they were, sufficed to demonstrate that steamers of necessarily high speed, and of sufficient carrying capacity to enable them to pay, were quite impossible."

The rapids *qua* rapids do not by any means constitute the only obstacle to navigation, as is too generally supposed by those who have not thought it necessary to probe very deeply into the question before dogmatising upon it. It is its immense diversity of phase that renders the Yang-tsze so formidable a river. During November, April, and May, the two periods of the year between high and low water when the river may be said to be asleep, navigation by light-draught powerful steamers may be undertaken with a certain degree of safety, and it has been during these months that such steamers as have made the passage have done so. But during the remaining nine months of the year the river presents two widely different phases, each

equally dangerous to steam navigation,—its high-water phase and its low-water phase. From December to March, when the river is at low water, the gorges and the reaches between the rapids are tranquil and easy, but it is precisely at this season that the rapids present their greatest difficulty. The three low-water rapids—Kong Ling, 38 miles above Ichang; Chin T'an, 44 miles above Ichang; and Hsin Lung T'an, 177 miles above Ichang—may be taken as examples. The only steamer that ever tackled the Chin T'an and Hsin Lung T'an rapids was Mr Little's *Lechuen*, which was little more than a steam launch, and was in point of fact hauled up the rapids in the same way as the native junk. Of the two attempts that have been made to negotiate the Kong Ling, the first ended in complete disaster and the second came within an ace of meeting with a similar fate. In the case of the Chin T'an and Hsin Lung T'an rapids there is a heavy fall in levels between top and bottom, amounting in the case of the latter to between seven and eight feet, while their danger is accentuated by powerful back-waters

and vicious gyrating swirls. As the river rises the low-water rapids disappear and others form, the worst on a thirty-foot level being the Yeh T'an, the Meou Kou, and the Fou T'an, while the reaches between the rapids are converted from quiet stretches into turbulent rock-strewn mazes of swirling waters. The Yatse Ho, a stretch of fourteen miles between Nan Ton and Kong Ling, provides an example of this phase of the river. With a further rise during summer to a level of sixty or more feet, the peaceful gorges of the low-water period became turbulent chutes. The vast volume of pent-in water meeting all manner of submerged obstacles dashes in zigzag from shore to shore, cannoning off walls of rock until the whole gorge becomes one rushing, gyrating mass of angry water. A whole treatise might be written upon the particular obstacles which obtrude themselves at various places upon the river at different times of the year, but perhaps enough has been said to show that it was the opinion expressed by the members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission, rather than the "terrors of the so-

called rapids" that arose "more from ignorance of fact and circumstance than experience," and that the assertion of Sir Robert Douglas that "a passage might easily be cleared" is too airy a generality for acceptance unless accompanied by definite suggestions as to practical methods for its accomplishment, and explanations as to how, even if a passage was cleared at some of the worst rapids, this would overcome the difficulties provided by the fourteen-mile stretch of the Yatse Ho and the tremendous force of the gorges at high water.

During 1906 an oft-suggested scheme for making use of steam haulage at the rapids crystallised on paper in a more or less definite shape, the model adopted being the system in use upon the Rhone. By Article V. of the Mackay Treaty of 1902 the Chinese Government admit that "they are aware of the desirability of improving the navigability of the waterway between Ichang and Ch'ung-k'ing," but set it upon record that "they are also fully aware that such improvement might involve heavy expense"—a conspicuous

instance of the perspicacity of the governing body. They agree, therefore, "that until improvements can be carried out, steamship owners shall be allowed to erect, at their own expense, appliances for hauling through the rapids."

It appears to the uninitiated, however, that in connection with such schemes sufficient attention has not been paid to the enormous rise and fall of the water at different seasons of the year. Let us take an example. The summer of 1905 was remarkable in Ssŭch'uan for a prolonged period of drought. "Towards the end of July the crops had become parched, and rain was earnestly looked for. As is customary, one of the city gates was closed, and the magistrate was called upon to offer up prayers at various temples."[1] He prayed with prodigious effect. On August 5th he attended at the city temple, and on August 6th rain fell in torrents, some distance higher up the river a waterspout burst, carrying away with it half a hill, and by the 10th

[1] Report by the Commissioner of Customs of Ch'ung-k'ing, 1905.

the river at Ch'ung-k'ing had risen to 108 feet. "Houses, coffins, corpses, and living freight on various supports, were all making their way down river at a rapid rate, and the city walls were lined by natives watching the scene." [1]

When the river rises 90 or 100 feet, what becomes of the hauling apparatus? If in the first instance it is set up at a sufficient height in the mountain-side to allow for such rises, what provision is to be made for handling the colossal weight of the enormously long steel hawser which it is proposed to use? Finally, by what means is the necessary steering-power to be obtained to counteract both the force of the current and the eddies and the huge weight of the hauling-line? These are questions to which I have never succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory answer.

On a small scale, approximating as nearly as possible to the present junks in shape and size, a tug and lighter scheme appears to be the only one at present practicable,

[1] Report by the Commissioner of Customs of Ch'ung-k'ing, 1905.

Battling with the Yang-tsze.

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tug and lighter alike being hauled up those rapids which do not prove amenable to steam in the same way as the ordinary junk. Such a scheme might be feasible for six or seven months in the year, and might even be carried on to a limited extent during high water, the passage being thereby quickened and greater regularity and security obtained.[1] That it would serve to lower the present high level of charges, however, appears to me to be extremely problematical.

It will be seen, then, that I hold little hope of any great improvement being made in the navigability of the Yang-tsze, it being to future railways that we must look, in my opinion, rather than to the taming of the river for improvement in the means of communication in this part of the world. However unwilling we may be to admit it, any material improvement on the present system of navigation is unquestionably beyond the range of present probability, and the same system in which "the annual loss of life, in

[1] According to late information a Chinese company has been formed for putting such a scheme into practice.

spite of the excellent service of life-boats maintained by public subscription, is appalling, the percentage of cargo lost and damaged incredible,"[1] is likely to survive for many a year to come.

[1] Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, No. 3571: Trade of Ichang for the year 1905. The words quoted, however, are perhaps calculated to give a somewhat exaggerated idea of the loss both of life and of goods.

CHAPTER V.

CH'UNG-K'ING.

HAVING conducted the reader to the important treaty port of Ch'ung-k'ing, let me now give him in brief outline a sketch of the remarkable series of negotiations which led up to the opening of the port to trade. A perusal of them will be found to provide much instruction and some little entertainment. When the Chifu Agreement of 1876, arising out of the murder of a consular officer, Mr Augustus Raymond Margary, was drawn up between Great Britain and China, it was decided among other things that while the British Government might send officers to reside at Ch'ung-k'ing to watch the condition of British trade, the port should not be open to British merchants

until steamers succeeded in reaching it. As, however, under Article 47 of the Treaty of Tientsin, ships resorting to "ports of trade other than those declared open by this treaty" were with their cargo liable to confiscation, it gradually dawned upon the minds of those concerned that a Chinese puzzle had been propounded about as susceptible of solution as the problem as to which came first, the chicken or the egg?

The British merchant, however, has no time to waste in guessing at Chinese diplomatic conundrums which have no answers, and in 1899 Mr Little built an experimental steamer, the *Kuling*, with which he proposed ascending the Yang-tsze, and so claiming the opening of the port to trade. Such Alexandrian methods of cutting their Gordian knot were not at all to the liking of the Mandarinate, and a diplomatic wrangle immediately ensued, the Chinese surpassing themselves in fertility of argument when they declared, in an official despatch to Sir John Walsham, that "the monkeys in the Gorges would throw down rocks on the passing steamers, and that then the poor Chinese

Government would be held responsible"! The scheme was abandoned and the *Kuling* sold; but the absurdity of the position seems at last to have occurred to the legation mind, and in the following year the Governments of Great Britain and China, being desirous of settling in an amicable spirit "the divergence of opinion" (*sic*) which had arisen with respect to the position of Ch'ung-k'ing, agreed that the town should be declared open to trade on the same footing as any other treaty port.[1]

Thus was one anomaly wiped off the slate of Anglo-Chinese diplomacy—only to make room, however, for another almost equally absurd, for it was agreed that when once Chinese steamers carrying cargo ran to Ch'ung-k'ing, then, and not till then, should British steamers have access to the port. Chinese diplomacy had imposed a veto for a second time upon British aspirations. The position of the port and the question of steam navigation on the upper waters of the Yang-tsze were finally settled, as far as diplomacy could settle them, by the

[1] By an additional article to the Chifu Agreement, signed at Pekin on March 31st, 1890.

Treaty of Shimonoseki between Japan and China in April 1895, by which Ch'ung-k'ing was opened to "the trade, residence, industries, and manufactures of Japanese subjects (and by virtue of the most favoured nation clause to the subjects of other countries) under the same conditions and with the same privileges and facilities as exist at the present open cities, towns, and ports of China"; and steam navigation declared lawful upon the upper waters of the Yang-tsze.

This brief *résumé* of the steps leading up to the opening of the commercial gate of Western China is of value as an example of the prodigious expenditure of diplomatic energy required in China for so simple a matter as the opening of a port to trade. Let me now descend for a space from the task of chronicling these matters of high state, to the humbler duty of narrating the trivial details of my own progress.

The Chinese clerk who had been entrusted with the duty of drawing up the necessary papers for myself and my companion at Ichang had not found leisure during his short but busy

life for studying the peculiarities of British aristocratic titles. It was for this reason no doubt that, when our ship's papers came to be examined, my companion was found to be masquerading under a title as lord Bolt, while I was described as Mr Ronald Shay, though there was added as an afterthought, or perhaps as a sop to my vanity, an explanatory note to the effect that I too was a "British lord." Perhaps, too, in this confusion of description there was an explanation of the fact that we found it necessary to thread our way through so many yards of Imperial Maritime Custom-house red-tape, before being enabled to rid ourselves of our boats and establish ourselves on shore. The points of detail in connection with our identity having been at length satisfactorily disposed of, there remained the boat's crew to be paid and tipped before we were able to call our souls our own. I was satisfied with my crew, and decided to give them a substantial present in the shape of a silver ingot weighing approximately 10 *taels*, equivalent to about £1, 10s. in English money. To men whose ideas of money are constructed upon a *cash* basis,

some 400 or 500 of which coins go to the shilling, a sum equivalent to about 15,000 *cash* is a very large one; but the Chinese never loses his head under any circumstances connected with money. "Are they pleased?" I asked of Joe. "They say, sir, that they had expected that you would have given them more," was the laconic reply. This sort of answer is somewhat staggering until one begins to comprehend some of the peculiarities of the Chinese mind.

The streets of Ch'ung-k'ing consist of narrow alleys of steep stone steps which, by reason of the ceaseless journeyings of countless water-carriers, are damp and unspeakably dirty. An attempt to erect water-works proved unsuccessful, and this useful reform was vetoed in order to enable the water-carriers to continue to carry their water-skins to and from the river, earning a few *cash*, and rendering the streets abominable to the rest of the community. Truly, China is a conservative country.

On the whole, Ch'ung-k'ing frowns rather than smiles upon the stranger, and a leaden sky,

which hangs like a pall over the river valley, adds appreciably to the gloom of the whole picture. Indeed, for general unpleasantness the climate would appear to rival that of our own country. Listen to the opinion of those who live there. "The climate of Ch'ung-k'ing is without doubt depressing to a degree to foreigners. The dreary skies and damp mists prevailing between November and March, the fierce heat of summer and practical absence of spring and autumn—meaning a quick change from hot to cold, and *vicē versa*,—are most trying to all; add to this the effects of isolation, residence within the city (and all that it implies), together with want of means for exercise and absence of amusement, and it is plain that everything combines to produce a state of mental and nervous depression, and perhaps a low standard of vitality." [1] Happy foreign residents! Even the Chinese seem to have noticed that there is something abnormal about the murkiness of their climate, for they have a proverb which declares that the dogs of

[1] Report by Mr W. C. Haines Watson, Acting Commissioner of Customs, 1901.

Ssŭch'uan bark when they see the sun. The Ssŭch'uan dog is obviously an intelligent and observant creature, for in addition to barking at the sun he also habitually barks at all beggars, tramps, and foreigners.

Such foreign residents, however, as honour Ch'ung-k'ing with their presence are there for business, and not for pleasure. Through Ch'ung-k'ing passes the bulk of the trade of Western China, and those who advocated the opening of the port to trade can point confidently to the returns in justification of their policy. The gross value of the trade of the port coming under cognisance of the Imperial Maritime Customs has trebled since it was opened, having increased from 9,245,737 *Hk. Tls.* in 1892 to 29,001,410 *Hk. Tls.*, equivalent to £4,773,148, in 1906. It is not surprising, then, that an air of immense activity pervades the town, that the thoroughfares are busy and crowded, and that there are streets of commodious and well-stocked shops. The question of trade, however, will be dealt with as a whole in a subsequent chapter.

It was now my intention to travel to

Ch'êngtu, the capital of the province, visiting the celebrated salt wells of Tzu-liu-ching on the way, and I lost little time in making the necessary arrangements for covering the 300 miles that lay before me. A travelling-chair was purchased for 14s., not with any particular view to assisting my physical progress, but with a view to averting the awful fate held up by Colborne Baber before the luckless traveller who is without one. I had no desire to be "thrust aside on the highway, to be kept waiting at ferries, to be relegated to the worst inn's worst room, and generally to be treated with indignity, or, what is sometimes worse, with familiarity as a peddling footpad, unable to gain a living in my own country"; therefore, I say, I indulged in an outlay of 14s. on a sedan-chair. For the baggage coolies were engaged, who guaranteed to carry loads of 133 lb. apiece, and to cover the distance in thirteen marching days, for wages at the rate of 10d. per man per day, and an escort was applied for and provided by the local officials.

The Taotai (the highest civil official) was a charming old gentleman, who supplied me

with most valuable information in reply to my many inquiries concerning the province. No regulations, he said, had as yet been put into force for reducing the area of land under the poppy in accordance with the imperial opium edict which had been issued in September, "but," he added, "the people have been exhorted to give up the cultivation of the poppy." It usually requires something more than exhortation to persuade a man to give up the means of supplying himself with his daily bread. An acre of wheat, according to Sir Alexander Hosie, will give an average yield of grain of the value of £4, 5s. 6d., whereas a similar area will produce raw dry opium of the value of £5, 16s. 8d. Query, would polite exhortation be sufficient to persuade the owner of 50 acres to forego a sum of £77, 18s. 4d. a-year—£77, 18s. 4d. being equivalent to 779,000 *cash?* His answer to my question as to when the much-talked-of Ch'ung-k'ing-Ch'êngtu railway would be begun, was happy if not absolutely illuminating,—"I do not know," he said, "whether it will be next year." I felt that I could safely have enlightened him upon the

particular point at which his knowledge apparently failed.

One other matter called for attention before a start could be made—namely, the matter of *cash*. No amount of ingenuity could succeed in devising anything more calculated to dismay and exasperate the Westerner than the coinage of China. The Mexican dollar, which simplifies matters on the coast, is not recognised in the interior. The only coin that is generally accepted is the *cash*—a dirty, shapeless disc of brass with a square hole through the centre. These abominations are strung on a string, so many hundreds—the number varying according to the district in which one happens to be—being deemed the equivalent of a tael or ounce of silver. During the earlier stages of my journey I found from 1400 to 1500 *cash* equivalent to the *tael* (or roughly, 450 *cash* to the shilling), but with my onward progress the number steadily decreased, until on the western confines of Yünnan I was seldom lucky enough to get more than 800 for my *tael* of silver. This system has, of course, given birth to an important

class, namely, the money-changers, one or more of whom is a dire necessity in every village. The village money-changer keeps a pair of scales, or rather two pairs of scales, one for buying and one for selling, and having weighed the lump of silver in exchange for which *cash* are desired, hands over the equivalent number of hundreds, less a few *cash* by way of commission, to his victim. Pleasing complications are introduced into the pastime of money-changing by the fact that a nominal 100 *cash* does not as a matter of actual fact consist of 100, but varies from 98 to 33 according to the part of the empire in which you happen to be. "Nowhere does a Chinaman mean 1000 *cash* when he speaks of 1000 *cash*,"[1] and the only rule which is common to all *cash* problems throughout the eighteen provinces, and the only rule, therefore, which the traveller need trouble to bear in mind, is the unwritten law which decrees that 100 *cash* may be any number except 100. In some districts a number, which is more or less constant, is

[1] An Australian in China—Dr Morrison.

A quiet reach on the Yang-tsze.

fixed upon for convenience. In Tientsin, for instance, as Dr Morrison has pointed out, the 100 is any number one can pass except 100, "though by agreement the 100 is usually estimated at 98." Further variations are introduced by the difference in quality of the silver ingots, some qualities being infinitely more valuable than others, the money-changer being of course the self-appointed arbiter as to the quality of the particular piece of silver which he is about to change. The inexhaustible fund of inconvenience provided by such a system will no doubt suggest itself to the reader — such, for instance, as the enormous weight of the silver ingots, and still more of thousands of *cash*, especially in a country in which the traveller is obliged to rely exclusively upon human porterage for transport; but perhaps the greatest joke connected with the *cash* system will not have occurred to him. It consists in this, that the intrinsic value of the metal of which the *cash* are composed is considerably in excess of its face value as a coin. It follows as an inevitable consequence that by melting down the *cash* and

converting them into household utensils you immediately increase its value. It will, of course, be asked how it is, if this be so, that the whole of the *cash* of the empire has not been melted down long since and converted into kettles, pots, and pans? The difficulty was got over by the enactment of stringent laws, under which the penalty for melting down *cash* is death. Some effort to improve the currency system is now being made, and a silver dollar for Ssŭch'uan is being minted in Ch'êngtu. It bears on its face a superscription which says that it is equal in value to 72 cents, though for what inscrutable reason the number 72 has been selected, instead of the obvious 100, I am at a loss to understand. So deeply rooted in the Chinese character, however, is the dislike of allowing things to be what they seem, that no one—not even a Chinaman—has so far succeeded in changing one for more than 71 cents.

Needless to say, I did not attempt to compete with the Ch'ung-k'ing money-changers in arriving at a solution of the various calculations which had to be worked out before I

could be supplied with the requisite number of *cash* and silver ingots. I admitted my own immense inferiority in capacity for threading my way through the infinite intricacies of Chinese finance, and pocketed, metaphorically speaking,—it is, of course, quite impossible to literally pocket strings of *cash*, — whatever sums I was awarded by the generosity and indulgence of the professional financiers.

CHAPTER VI.

CH'UNG-K'ING TO TZU-LIU-CHING.

I LEFT Ch'ung-k'ing on November 27, dismounting from the confinement of my chair as soon as the city gates were passed. The roads of Ssŭch'uan are of their kind the best in all probability in China, but they are not ideal from any point of view. They are narrow ways paved with stone, which in mountainous districts become stone staircases. This at once puts the possibility of wheeled transport out of court and accounts for the prevalence of chairs throughout the province. The hardness of the stone is apt to produce foot-soreness in the pedestrian, while riding on such material is but a poor amusement.

After leaving the city we plunged into

Stone staircases.

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pretty, hilly country, cultivated minutely in terraces to the summits of the hills. Large numbers of memorial arches spanned the way, erected by an admiring posterity, and with the gracious consent of a paternal emperor, to the memory of those virtuous and constant widows who had preferred to spend life single after the decease of their husbands, to taking a second ticket in the matrimonial lottery.

For the whole of the day our paved way wound among rounded hills dotted here and there with bamboos, cypresses, mulberries, banyans, and other evergreens. In the lower parts the land presented a patchwork of terraced enclosures under water, while on the hillsides were growing indigo, tobacco, wheat (a winter crop here), beans, turnips, and poppy quite recently sown. The quantity and variety of vegetables to be seen growing all over the country is, indeed, astonishing; the people themselves are enormously fond of a vegetable diet, and "indulge fearlessly in almost everything green, from clover to the young spring shoots of trees."

We did a short march of sixty *li*, or roughly fifteen miles, and halted for the night at the inn in the village of Pai-shih-yi.

To any one who has travelled in the interior of China the word "inn" does not conjure up those visions of delight which excited the enthusiasm of Dr Samuel Johnson. "There is nothing," he declared, "which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." It would probably be nearer the mark to say that "there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much unhappiness is produced as by a Chinese tavern or inn!" The assertion of Marco Polo that at every twenty or thirty miles there is "a large and handsome building" in which all the rooms are to be found "furnished with fine beds and all other necessary articles in rich silk," and where everything that can be wanted is provided, so that "if even a king were to arrive at one of these he would find himself well lodged," does not apply to the present day. For the next three months and a half I lodged almost nightly in a Chinese inn of some sort or

another, and for plain unadulterated truth give me the description of the admirable Abbé Huc, who found "the effect of the scene, dimly exhibited by an imperfect wick floating amid thick, dirty, stinking oil, whose receptacle is ordinarily a broken tea-cup, to be fantastic, and to the stranger fearful"!

The "everything that can be wanted" of Marco Polo is summed up by a wooden trestle-bed and a wisp of straw, a wooden table and stool, boiled rice and hot water. The rooms open on to a stone or mud courtyard, which is a receptacle for the accumulated filth of the establishment; the windows and doors are of paper, pasted on to a wooden framework, square feet of which are usually missing, and on all sides arises what Trinculo would describe as "a very ancient and a fishlike smell."

At night the inn becomes a scene of lively animation. The coolies troop in by degrees, and after disposing of their loads, shout noisily for food and hot water. To the European, whose organs appear to be more highly developed than those of the Ssŭch'uan coolie, this

terrific shouting becomes the source of intense irritation. A Ssŭch'uan coolie may not be more than a foot away from the individual whom he wishes to address, but that makes no difference, and he bawls at him at the top of his voice, as if he were half a mile away instead of standing at his elbow. When some thirty or forty men confined within the four walls of the inn's courtyard are engaged in this harmonious occupation simultaneously, the effect on the auricular nerves may be imagined. It is only when his food has been put away, and when the fumes of the opium-pipe, which my coolies invariably carried, have begun to work, that peace and comparative quiet descend upon the building.

On the following day we tramped about twenty-three miles to Ma-fang Chiao. The populous nature of this part of Ssŭch'uan is proclaimed on all sides by the infinite care with which every inch of ground is cultivated. Moreover, there was much traffic along the narrow stone-paved way, and many coolies and ponies carrying great bundles of cotton yarn, which has travelled all the way from the

Coolie transport in Ssŭch'uan.

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mills of Bombay, to be woven into the common cloth which clothes the bulk of the province's 45,000,000 inhabitants, by the housewives of Ssŭch'uan. Numerous small towns are scattered along the road, their streets providing a common playground for children, dogs, pigs, and poultry, except when a market is being held, which is usually the case every fifth day, when they become choked with people from the districts round.

The population, which at a modest estimate is placed at 45,000,000 to-day, has increased rapidly during the past two centuries, for a census taken in the year 1710 gave a return of only 144,154 souls. This surprisingly small population in a province nearly three times the size of Great Britain was not, however, due to natural causes, but to a rebellion headed by three desperadoes, Li Tzu-ch'eng, Chang Hsien-chung, and Wang San-huai, in the declining years of the Ming dynasty. The most remarkable and, as Colborne Baber points out, ultimately almost the only figure in the story was Chang, whose taste for slaughter amounted almost to a passion. Some of the reforms

carried out by him have been collected by Baber from De Mailla's history of China, and are summarised as follows :—

Massacred	32,310 undergraduates.
	3000 eunuchs.
	2000 of his own troops.
	27,000 Buddhist priests.
	600,000 inhabitants of Ch'êngtu.
	280 of his own concubines.
	400,000 wives of his troops.
	Everybody else in the province.
Destroyed	Every building in the province.
Burnt . .	Everything inflammable.

Besides cotton yarn, children and young pigs carried in baskets at the end of a carrying-pole, and a little salt, were the only other commodities at all noticeable. I looked anxiously among the small shops and market-stalls for goods of European make, but the nearest approach to foreign articles were matches. These, however, on closer acquaintance, proved to have been made in two local match factories near Ch'ung-k'ing, started in 1894, and given a monopoly in the province for twenty-five years, and were being sold at a few *cash* a-box of

seventy matches. It is interesting as illustrative of the extreme frugality of the Chinese character to note that before laying out the sum of three *cash*—say the fourteenth part of a penny—upon a box, the purchaser may be seen counting the number of matches in the box, in order to assure himself that he is receiving full value for his money, and to enable him to discard any matches found without heads before finally concluding his bargain. Even the ubiquitous Japanese match is unable to compete on these terms, and if the Japanese match cannot, it is difficult to see how any other could. The Ch'ung-k'ing match is quite the lowest in the scale, and smells horribly, though to the sons and daughters of China the smell of burning sulphur is doubtless a pleasing variation from the usual all-pervading perfume of a Chinese home.

Another two days' march brought us to Yung Chang Hsien, a town of some size and importance. It is celebrated locally for the manufacture of a cloth from the ramie fibre, which is said to be much worn in the hot weather, though according to Sir Alexander Hosie "it

will not bear comparison with Canton grass-cloth, which is the finest and most expensive in China."[1] The most conspicuous feature in the textile line, however, here, as in all the towns and villages that I subsequently visited, was provided by bundles of coarse, loosely-woven, narrow-width, native-made cotton cloth, dyed red and green with German aniline dye, which is fast taking a hold upon the market, as well as plain grey shirting and the more ordinary blue. A few shops stocked Manchester goods, grey shirting and cotton *Italians*, for which there appears to be a growing demand.

The man of China is not an easy individual to extract information from. He will talk volubly, but always vaguely and generally irrelevantly. "How much of this do you sell in a year?" I asked of a cloth merchant, pointing to a roll of black *Italians*. "Oh, several tens of pieces," he replied after a few minutes of profound thought. "But how many tens?" I persisted. "A few tens," was the laconic reply. I had been reading Dr Smith on Chinese disregard of accuracy, and I felt that I could

[1] Report on the province of Ssŭch'uan.

endorse his prognostication that "the first generation of Chinese chemists will probably lose many of its number as a result of the process of mixing 'a few tens of grains' of something with 'several tens of grains' of something else, the consequence being an unanticipated earthquake"—and the thought made me feel almost happy. Conversation by question and answer becomes a sort of game. If you desire information upon any particular subject, you have to ask a question upon some other topic. The difficulty of hitting upon the right one is obvious. Over and over again, when putting a question through Joe, I would get an answer which could by no possible ingenuity be made to relate in any way to the question. "What is the name of this village?" I would ask. After a few moments of profound thought would come the reply, "Yes, that is a rice field," or any other equally useless and irrelevant reply. Joe gave up translating answers of this kind after he had been in my service for a short time, realising that information of this kind merely served to exasperate me. This particular Chinese characteristic is,

of course, a very well-known one. Baber, who talked Chinese fluently, tells how he once stopped to inquire of two men who were hoeing a field, what was the purpose of a mound hard by. "After listening with evident interest to my question, and without making any reply, one of them remarked to the other, "How much the language of these foreigners resembles ours!"

Excellent-looking coal was being brought in by coolies in baskets from a mine at Ta-sung-sü, said to be distant about ten miles.

We halted at Lung Chang Hsien on the night of December 1st, and on the following day left the main road to Ch'êngtu, keeping west for Tzu-liu-ching. The soil here appeared to be rather poorer than that through which we had hitherto travelled, and pines grew in scanty earth on the hill-tops. For the rest, our road wound unevenly among low rounded hills, covered for the most part with innumerable brakes of sugar-cane. The inevitable bean protruded on such space as was not occupied by other vegetables, and there was, as usual, a good deal of rice land and some poppy. Sugar-

cane, however, was *the* crop *par excellence* throughout the day; and for several days to come we passed through many miles of cane-brake. "Sugar is a great industry of Ssŭch'uan, and is largely exported eastwards," but the process of manufacture is primitive, and the taste is, to my mind, exceedingly nasty. Peter was right when he complained to me that the "sugar was very sour"; but acidity is not the quality one looks for in sugar.

I had not been much troubled with Chinese curiosity so far, but I was treated to an example of it to-day. I had halted for lunch as usual at a small town, and finding no regular inn, seated myself at an empty table in the principal eating-house, open as usual on to the street. The news of my strange presence spread like wildfire, and in an incredibly short time the population had turned out—men, women, and children—to see the foreigner eat. Joe had not turned up, and as they crowded round while my modest repast was being set out, I was constrained to address them in plain king's English, pointing out that they would all have a better chance of seeing me eat if

they stood back a little and so widened the circle round me. They chose to interpret my remarks as an invitation, and pressed so close that I had scarcely elbow-room. There is something peculiar about the stolid, vacuous stare of a Chinese crowd. It affects one variously according to one's own particular mood; but I have never found it anything but unpleasant. It generally irritates. You feel a wild desire to rush in and hit out right and left, and chance the consequences. Nothing will move it when once it has made up its mind that it wishes to place you under its observation. It just stares with an exasperating, unblinking, vacuous stare. How often when gazing at the empty expressionless features of a Chinese face have I recalled the half-humorous query which a French diplomatist once put to a French bishop apostolic in China: "Et croyez-vous vraiement que les Chinois ont une âme?" On this occasion I innocently let fall an empty tin which had once contained potted meat. The effect among the juvenile portion of the audience was instantaneous; but when the air cleared after the struggle which

ensued, I noticed that the prize had fallen to an elderly, and, judging by his attenuated moustache and grizzly beard, venerable grandfather. On leaving I found that as long as I walked, the town was all for accompanying me indefinitely on my way, so I took to my chair till the sightseers had dropped behind, and then walked on to Niu-fu-tu, where I halted for the night. An inconvenient crowd here was dispersed by an ingenious member of my escort, who procured a bucket of water and sprinkled the onlookers liberally from the vantage-ground of the inn roof. One more day brought us to Tzu-liu-ching, where I called a day's halt with a view to inspecting the brine wells.

CHAPTER VII.

TZU-LIU-CHING TO CH'ÊNGTU.

TZU-LIU-CHING is a considerable town running in long straggling streets—narrow and desperately dirty—on both sides of an affluent of the Lu Ho, called locally the Ching Ho or Well river. The surrounding country is hilly, and in all directions clusters of skeleton derricks may be seen, resembling the derricks of an oil-field. But the smoke and smell of oil are both absent, the motive-power being in every case supplied by buffaloes. There are the usual piles of native-made cloth, and many shops stocking foreign-made fancy goods—perfumes and powders from Osaka; looking-glasses, clocks, watches, cigar-holders, buttons, and belts from Germany

and Austria. There are also a great many shops stocking foreign piece-goods—a little American sheeting and a great deal of English shirting and black and coloured *Italians*, besides prints and a few other varieties,—proving the prosperous condition of the salt industry; for it is only those who are well-to-do who can afford to invest in foreign cloths. In one shop I was told by the owner that he could sell foreign piece goods to the value of 5000 or 6000 strings of *cash* in the year—*i.e.*, £500 or £600. I have already warned the reader of the incurable antipathy of the Chinese for accuracy. Let me warn him again. An acquaintance told Dr Smith that two men had spent 200 strings of *cash* on a theatrical exhibition, adding a moment later, "It was 173 strings, but that is the same as 200—is it not?"[1] A large crowd accompanied me during my inspection of the town, and made comments of varying interest and intelligence whenever I stopped to examine the contents on sale at any shop. At one stall where I was

[1] 'Chinese Characteristics,' p. 54.

looking at some English shirting, on which was written in Roman letters details as to size and place of origin, I was amused to learn from Joe that he had just been addressed by an interested onlooker, who asked with considerable scepticism whether it was probable that the barbarian (*i.e.*, myself) could read the characters upon the cloth. He was assured that there was a strong balance of probability in favour of his being able to do so. At another shop a Chinese with obviously superior knowledge on questions of ethnology informed the onlookers that I was a Japanese. After which assertion I was ready to accept the statement of an amiable well-owner who invited me to visit his property, to the effect that "not many foreigners came to Tzu-liu-ching."

Salt has been worked in Ssŭch'uan for the past 1700 years, and possibly for much longer. The wells range in depth from "a few tens" of feet, as the Chinese would say, to over 2000 feet. The particular well which I inspected was said to have a depth of 2300

Memorial arch in Ssŭch'uan.

Chinese feet.[1] In a shed a short distance from the boring, four buffaloes harnessed to an immense drum were being driven round and round by running attendants. The rope was thus wound up, and at the expiration of about a quarter of an hour the "baler," a cylinder of bamboo, 80 feet in length, with a valve at the bottom, was brought to the surface. The brine was emptied from this into a small tank, from which it was conveyed by pipe to a reservoir. Close by the brine well was a gas well. The natural gas was collected and distributed from the mouth of the well by a series of bamboo pipes to the evaporating house near by, where it was made use of in a number of small furnaces, over each of which stood a large, shallow, circular pan containing the brine. Each pan, we were informed, could yield from 130 to 140 *catties* (173 lb. to 186 lb.) a-day, and this particular gas well supplied sufficient fuel for 200 pans. "How many wells are there in the district?"

A Chinese foot = 13⅓ inches.

I asked. But just as I had put this important question, one of my Ch'ung-k'ing escort broke into the conversation with some extremely animated remarks. I stopped in my inquiries to gather this fresh flood of light which was being thrown upon the question. After waiting patiently while his remarks were being poured forth, I demanded a translation. "He says, sir," declared Joe with unruffled seriousness, "that it is an extraordinary thing that the gas should be invisible so long as it is in the pipe, and that it should then become fire immediately on leaving the mouth of the pipe!" After this illuminating assertion I paid no further attention to the puerilities of my followers. The interruption, however, had distracted the attention of my informant, and in reply to my question he answered vaguely and in round numbers that there were altogether in the district upwards of 10,000 wells, with an annual output of 20,000,000 or 30,000,000 *catties*. The cost of the salt on the spot was, he said, about 13 or 14 *cash* a *catty*, plus a Government tax

of 10 *cash* a *catty*. I was further given to understand that a well takes anything from one to fourteen years to bore. When a man has a little capital he starts boring, and when the capital is exhausted he perforce stops until he has accumulated sufficient to go on again—a matter sometimes of years.

I had not the time to test the accuracy of the information given above, and prefer therefore to accept the figures of Sir Alexander Hosie, than whom no one is better qualified to speak on all matters connected with the province of Ssŭch'uan. The following figures are taken from his chapter on the salt industry in 'Three Years in Western China,' and his report on the province of Ssŭch'uan (China No. 5, 1904). Speaking of the brine-fields of Ssŭch'uan as a whole, he says: "At depths varying from 30 feet to over 2000 feet brine is found, raised, and evaporated. . . . So great is the supply, and so vast the industry, . . . that Ssŭch'uan, in addition to satisfying home requirements, is able to send an immense surplus to Kuei-chow, parts of Yün-nan, as well as to the

eastern provinces." The number of wells in the Tzu-liu-ching district is given as "over a thousand," and the fire wells as about a score; while the cost of raising the brine is placed at from 12 to 14 *cash* a *catty*, and of evaporation from 2 to 4 *cash*.[1] "There are altogether forty districts of Ssŭch'uan producing salt, and withered grass, lignite, wood, coal, and gas are all taken advantage of, each as the others are unavailable for fuel." The total output for the province, including "illicit" salt—*i.e.*, salt that escapes taxation—is estimated by Sir Alexander Hosie at not less than 300,000 tons a-year.

When watching the somewhat primitive methods employed in raising the brine, the foreigner naturally suggests steam. But, for some reason or other, steam-power does not appear to appeal to the people of Tzu-liu-ching. Two years before, a steam-boiler and windlass of foreign manufacture were imported,

[1] A recent report by Mr A. Rose, of the Consular service, places the number of wells at 5000, with an approximate output of 1,000,000 lb. a-day, and the cost of raising the brine at $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ *cash* a *catty*.

but whether the Tzu-liu-ching workmen did not understand the mechanism of the machine, or whether they saw in it a formidable rival and so wrecked it before its real capabilities became known, it was impossible to find out.[1] The only thing that was quite certain was that it did not work. My informant objected that the cost of coal would render it too expensive; and yet the buffaloes employed cost at least £5 apiece to purchase, and 300 *cash* a-day to feed, and only last from one to five years.

During the evening I had a visitor in the shape of an itinerant dentist, who showed me with much pride a stock of false teeth (made in Japan). He had been at Tzu-liu-ching, he said, for a month, and had inserted no less than 100 teeth in the mouths of the townspeople during his stay. I become more and more suspicious of round numbers as used by the Chinese every day.

[1] Gill states that some time before he was at Tzu-liu-ching in 1877, some Chinese connected with a European firm had attempted to introduce pumps. "They had only their heads broken for their pains by the coolies, who declared that their labour was being taken away from them."

On December 5th we left Tzu-liu-ching and accomplished a march over hilly ground all day, variously estimated at figures from 90 to 112 *li*. My own estimate was twenty-five miles, which I covered on foot between 7.30 A.M. and 3.30 P.M. For an hour we travelled through the populous and built-over environments of the salt metropolis, and then emerged into a country marked by a series of curious circular flat-topped hills, rising above the general undulating surface of the country like the tops of tea-canisters. On the low ground great water-buffaloes plodded ponderously along, up to their bellies in water, preparing the rice-fields for sowing, while beans and sugar-cane monopolised the hillsides. At frequent intervals along the road small shrines and temples were to be seen beneath the green bows of the far-spreading banyan.

After travelling north to the small town of Chien Pai, we turned east *viâ* Lung Hui Chen to Yang-chia-chang, where we halted for the night. A march of fifteen miles on the following day brought us to Tzŭ Chou, on the main road once more, and on the two following days we

accomplished long marches of 100 *li* each, though for some inscrutable Chinese reason we were informed that the 100 *li* march of the second day was not so far as the 100 *li* march of the first. The towns we now encountered were large and apparently prosperous. Considerable quantities of English piece-goods were always to be seen, and many shops appeared to flourish solely on the proceeds of fancy goods from continental Europe. My tour of inspection at Yang-chia-kai, a town at which we spent the night of December 8th, evoked a chorus of canine disapprobation,—a proceeding which Joe (who is acutely conscious of the unerring instinct by which the Ssŭch'uan dog singles out foreigners and beggars for his disapproval) attributed to the unwonted fact that the sun was shining. "The dogs of Yang-chia-kai are true Ssŭch'uan dogs," he remarked pleasantly to the crowd of gaping onlookers, whereat every one laughed. They laughed still more when a moment later a beggar in rags came hobbling along and shared with us the general howl from the pack of curs.

Among the shops dealing exclusively in

native produce, the bulk, and the most popular, appear to be those displaying on their counter the curious medley of food-stuffs which appeal so irresistibly to the Chinese palate. But even more noticeable to the foreigner are certain shops which are to be seen in every town and in almost every village in Ssŭch'uan, in which are stocked paper models, of considerable size, of horses, houses (perhaps 5 or 6 feet in height), men, and animals, and millions of imitation paper coins. What can be the use of these paper toys, you wonder? But they are very far from being toys: they are, on the contrary, important adjuncts in the most important ceremonies connected with the strongest and most universal religious doctrine of 400,000,000 of Chinese—the worship of ancestors. All these things are burned on the dead man's grave in order that in the spiritual world he may be provided with the spiritual essence of such things as he has been accustomed to in his materialised state.

The thoughtful may learn much from contemplating these symbols. In these paper

houses and goods, in these billions of paper *cash*, thousands of which may be purchased by the poorest for a few brass *cash*, is a certain index to many things in the national character. It is this exaggerated reverence for ancestors which hangs like a millstone round the neck of the Chinese. The people live in a state of voluntary bondage to the dead. They look to the past instead of to the future, and when the present generation considers the future at all, it is the vital necessity of raising posterity, not for the good of his country, but for the sole and all-important purpose of being assured that when he in his turn is numbered among the dead there shall be some one to pay him those attentions which he himself has lived to pay to some one else, that fills his mind. "If you have no children to foul the bed, you will have no one to burn paper at the grave," and this latter prospect being intolerable, the Chinese marries at the earliest possible moment, with the fixed determination of obviating it. "The hundreds of millions of living Chinese are under the most galling subjection to the countless thousands of

millions of the dead." How then (asks Dr Smith), while the people are content to exist solely for the benefit of the dead, is it possible for them to lift themselves out of the slough of stagnation which has clogged their limbs for countless generations? Perhaps the white races, or some of them, have something to be thankful for on this very score. In Australia and America the pinch of Chinese competition has already made itself felt. How infinitely greater would have been the pinch had not the extraordinary "thirst for decomposing under the immediate feet of their posterity" chained the Chinese race to their own soil!

A long march of twenty-five or twenty-six miles through driving rain brought us to Cha-tien-tzu, a small town situated near the summit of a mountain-pass, on December 9th, and early the next morning we found ourselves gazing down over the wide and intensely fertile Ch'êngtu plain from the summit of the range. A long descent, and then a walk of about ten miles across the level of the plain, dotted with farmsteads and clumps of bamboo, brought us to the suburbs of the capital. After walking for

My chair descending a mountain road.

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some time down greasy stone streets, between the usual rows of shops and stalls, we were brought suddenly face to face with a bridge spanning a wide stream, on the far side of which rose the walls and gates of the city. Here, for the next few days, we were hospitably entertained by Mr Gough of the Consular service, who resides in the capital in his capacity of Consul-General for the province of Sc̆uch'uan, though his residence in Ch'êngtu in his official capacity is not recognised by the Chinese authorities.

CHAPTER VIII.

CH'ÊNGTU.

CH'ÊNGTU is undoubtedly a fine city. Sir Alexander Hosie declares that it is the finest city that he has seen in China, and thinks that neither Peking nor Canton will bear comparison with it. That it has always been a city of great wealth and prosperity may be gathered from a remark let drop by Marco Polo: "Also there stands upon the bridge the Great Kaan's *comercque*, that is to say, his custom-house, where his toll and tax are levied. And I can tell you that the dues taken on this bridge bring to the lord a thousand pieces of fine gold every day and more." It is not, like Ch'ung-k'ing, a great distributing centre for foreign goods; but there are large and well-

stocked shops at which the products of Europe and America are on sale, and there must be a very large local trade. Silk is conspicuous among the local productions, the Ch'êngtu Fu district itself being responsible for an annual production valued at upwards of 3¾ million *taels*, out of a total production for the whole province of *Tls.* 15,000,000.

But the commercial interest of Ch'êngtu takes second place to its political interest. It is the capital of the "largest and probably the richest province in the empire." It is the seat of a viceroy who, in addition to administering the internal affairs of his kingdom, has the pleasure of keeping an eye upon the long line of the nebulous, and not infrequently troublous, Tibetan borderland. Here is a fertile field for seed-plots of sedition and intrigue. In truth, the Tibetans have not infrequently treated their Chinese overlords with scant respect. The Abbé Huc gives a delightful picture of the attitude of the Tibetans of Gaya towards the Chinese official who had been deputed to escort him and his colleague, M. Gabet, on their memorable

journey from Lhassa to Ssŭch'uan. His demand for the usual transport, supposed to be provided free for the Chinese Government, was met with fine contempt. The mandarin raved and threatened, but the people of Gaya preserved an attitude "deliciously haughty and contemptuous. One of them advanced a step, placed, with a sort of wild dignity, his right hand on the shoulder of Ly-Kouo-Ngan, and after piercing him with his great black eyes, shaded with thick eyebrows, 'Man of China,' said he, 'listen to me; dost thou think that with an inhabitant of the Valley of Gaya there is much difference between cutting off the head of a Chinese and that of a goat? The *oulah* [*i.e.*, transport] will be ready presently; if you do not take it, and go to-day, to-morrow the price will be doubled.'" The stirring description of the adventurous journey of Mr Cooper from Ch'êngtu to the Tibetan frontier in 1868, his imprisonment by the Chinese officials, and his final rescue by native chiefs, gives a vivid picture of the wild and ungoverned condition of the country. Now

again, in 1905, a serious rising in the Bathang and Litang districts had taken place against the Chinese. It had occurred to an ambitious and energetic Chinese official, seemingly, that much credit, and perhaps some more tangible gain, would accrue to himself were he to set about reforming the frontier tribes. The *reforms* inaugurated took the shape of reducing the numbers of, and curtailing the privileges and authority of, the lamas. Such a thing was not to be tolerated, and the Tibetans rose. The offending mandarin suffered the extreme penalty for his temerity; but, unfortunately, Europeans became involved in the upheaval, and more than one French missionary was brutally murdered, while an English botanist, Mr George Forrest, who happened to be collecting plants in the neighbourhood, narrowly escaped with his life, after suffering the most terrible hardships and privations. A punitive expedition was organised, with that deliberation which forms so conspicuous a feature of Chinese administration, and now in the winter of 1906 the troops, said

to be 5000 or 6000 in number, had just returned from a crusade of rapine, pillage, and plunder.

Money was required to pay for such an expedition, and the funds of the proposed Ch'êngtu-Hankow railway lay conveniently at hand. I would not, of course, go so far as to say that the whole of the sum abstracted for the purpose found its way to the pockets of those who were supposed to have earned it. History sometimes repeats itself, and it is worth recalling that Mr Cooper found a similar expedition, whose commander remained in Ch'êngtu, occupied in drawing pay at the monthly rate of 14s. a man for a paper army of 40,000 men, consisting of 250 men only, who had accomplished the truly magnificent feat of occupying nearly six months in covering a distance of thirty miles. In China there is always a big element of uncertainty in all official transactions connected with finance, and the only point in the present arrangement which apparently admitted of no doubt, was the abstraction of large sums from the fund specifically collected for the purpose

of railway construction. Armed with this knowledge, the local gentry hurled their bolt from the blue into the viceregal yamen, in the shape of a memorial insisting on the restoration to the fund of the sum of 1,000,000 *taels* unlawfully extracted. In his dilemma the viceroy cast his eyes round, and guided by Heaven (?), they chanced to light upon the high priest of a neighbouring temple who had so far forgotten himself as to take unto himself a wife, and who was actually found to be the father of a family. Could such violation of religious usage be tolerated? Not for a moment. Lands and property were instantly confiscated, and the offending priest paraded in a cangue before the scorn of a righteous population.

The streets in the Chinese city—there is a Tartar city adjoining, occupied by a Manchu garrison—are comparatively broad, and present a scene of lively animation. The gilded sign-boards which hung over the streets and excited the admiration of Sir Alexander Hosie have, however, largely disappeared, the present police Taotai, a man of progressive ideas, hold-

ing the opinion that they encroached unduly upon the thoroughfare. Other reforms of an even more salutary nature have been carried out, the crowds of beggars who formerly encumbered the city having been taken in hand, with the result that they are now to be seen, marshalled in bands and shorn of their pigtails, carrying out useful public works under police supervision.

During my stay in the capital I was received in audience by the Viceroy Hsi Liang. Social intercourse in China, especially among the upper classes, is a science in itself, the complex nature of which is quite beyond the grasp of the average European intellect. To the Chinese versed in all the intricacies of an etiquette which is the product of generations of the most subtle-minded race on earth, every action, every gesture, every carefully-worded phrase, is replete with hidden meaning. The flattered foreigner, complacently accepting at their face value the flowery compliments discharged at him, may, for all he can tell, be the object all the time of biting insult and studied affront. He has probably himself

violated, in his ignorance, the most sacred canons of correct behaviour. On one occasion I, in my ignorance, removed my hat on entering the reception-room of an official with whom I desired an interview. My host immediately rose and stripped off his outer garments! I was completely at a loss to understand his behaviour; but I have no doubt, now, that it was to be quits with me for my lack of respect in removing my hat. After this I learned off by heart such details of behaviour as are absolutely necessary, and for the rest trusted to luck not to appear too hopelessly *gauche* in the eyes of my hosts. When I remembered to shake hands cordially with myself instead of with my host on arrival and departure, to keep my hat fixed firmly upon my head instead of taking it off, to take the cup of tea which he would hand me but on no account to drink it until the moment of leaving, to accept the tit-bit picked out of the dishes on the table and placed on my plate by my host's own long-nailed fingers, and to return the compliment by selecting some particularly dainty-looking

morsel to bestow upon him, I felt that I had done all that could be expected of me. So far as I am capable of judging, my interview with his Excellency Hsi Liang passed off without any very grave breach of decorum upon my part, and upon my expressing a desire to inspect the arsenal he gave me a cordial invitation to lunch with him at that institution.

I found the arsenal in a state of change. Enlarged premises were in course of preparation outside the city, and supplies of German machinery were on the way, a German foreman having already reached the capital to supervise the setting up of the new plant. These are the things that at present fire the enthusiasm of young China. The heterogeneous collection of machinery bearing the names of firms from Leeds, Glasgow, Manchester, London, and the United States which I saw, is symbolic of the confusion and lack of method of the past. Five Mauser rifles were being turned out per diem; but the capacity of the new works is to be fifty. The

mint, which is in the same compound as the arsenal, likewise reflects the spirit of the times, for here I saw the new Chinese rupee—the first coin upon which the head of any Chinese emperor has ever been struck—being turned out in large numbers. Its origin is due to the fact that considerable numbers of Indian rupees have for many years filtered through from Tibet to Western China. That a coin bearing the features of an alien monarch should find favour with the subjects of the "Son of Heaven" was not to be borne by an official inspired by the new creed, which preaches the practice of modern methods for asserting the ancient doctrine of China for the Chinese. A memorial to the throne met with a favourable reply, and now coins the exact copy of the Indian rupee, but bearing the portrait of the occupant of the Dragon throne, were being despatched to Ta-Chien-lu at the rate of one and three-quarter millions a-year. We lunched sumptuously and at length, dishes from the cookery-books of Europe alternating with bird's-nest soup, sharks' fins, sea-slugs,

lotus-seeds in syrup, and other delicacies, the receipts for which remain locked in the bosoms of Celestial cooks.

The college for modern learning, erected in compliance with the peace protocol of 1900, I found in a flourishing condition, with 378 students voraciously seeking the knowledge of the peoples of the West. It started late and badly, a building for the purpose having been reluctantly erected by official orders in 1904, which building had shortly afterwards to be destroyed as unsafe, the contractor having expended upon it only 10,000 out of the 30,000 *taels* for which he contracted to do the work. Students were not easy to find; but with the tremendous impetus given to innovation in all parts of China as the Russo-Japanese war developed, a change came over the people of Ssŭch'uan, and before long the difficulty of securing students was replaced by the difficulty of accommodating all those who desired to learn.

Before leaving Ch'êngtu I cashed a draft obtained in Shanghai. The ancient banking system of China is in the hands of the men

In the Tartar city, Ch'êngtu.

of a single province, the province of Shansi, and their code of honour is of the most exacting description. I have already had occasion to remark upon the hopeless inconvenience of Chinese coinage. It is one of the surprises of this extraordinary country that side by side with the most primitive system of coinage should exist a most efficient banking system, spread like a network over the whole of the empire. Surprise gives way to unfeigned astonishment when it is realised that the banking system of China is the oldest in the world, and was the father, in all probability, of the vast credit and exchange system of Europe. The oldest bank-note known to be extant is a Chinese bank-note issued during the reign of Hung Wú in the fourteenth century, 300 years before the issue of bank-notes in Europe, and 600 years after their earliest appearance in Asia. There is, indeed, little doubt that Europe has to thank Asia for the foundations of her modern civilisation. If she suffered grievous affliction at the hands of the invading legions of Asia, she was at any rate amply repaid.

For it was thanks in large measure to the intercourse between East and West, which was generated by the clash of nations at the time when the turbulent Mongol hordes thundered at her gates, that Europe acquired the century-old inventions of Asia. Knowledge of the polarity of the lodestone, the art of printing, the rude power of gunpowder, —these were some of the gifts culled from the superior stores of Asian wisdom. "By the shock of nations the darkness of the middle ages was dispersed. Calamities which at first aspect seemed merely destined to afflict mankind, served to arouse it from the lethargy in which it had remained for ages; and the subversion of twenty empires was the price at which Providence accorded to Europe the light of modern civilisation."[1]

When one bears in mind the long start which Asia enjoyed along the road of progress, the backward place which she occupies to-day appears all the more remarkable. The tremendous strides which China will have to take before recovering her place among

[1] M. Abel Rémusat.

the competing nations of the world are forced upon the notice of the traveller at every turn. Thus the immense obstacles which stand in the way of even so elementary and so necessary a reform as the construction of railways were brought to light during my stay at Ch'êngtu by the publication, for the first time, of a balance-sheet of the proceeds of three years' enforced contributions and taxation towards a fund for building a line from Ch'êngtu to Hankow. This document, though interesting as a curiosity, was of little value as a statement of accounts, since, as I have already mentioned, a portion at least of the miserably inadequate sum of 4½ million *taels*—say £677,000—said to be in hand had been abstracted, temporarily at any rate, to pay for the punitive expedition to the borders of Tibet, while it was generally reported that of the remainder the greater part had been commandeered provide machinery for the arsenal and mints at Ch'êngtu and Ch'ung-k'ing,—a state of affairs which was even hinted at by the balance-sheet itself, in which it was affirmed

that the sum of 1½ million *taels* was "held at interest in the mint of Ch'ung-k'ing." The true inwardness of this admission can only be appreciated by those who, like myself, have seen large portions of the material and machinery intended for the new mint, lying wrecked in various rocky reaches of the Yang-tsze, or by those who may have chanced to notice a significant paragraph in the report of the Commissioner of Customs for Ch'ung-k'ing for 1905, which, after noting that a Taotai had been sent by the Viceroy to establish a mint, went on to say that "dissatisfaction was apparent before long at the rapidity with which money was being spent without much result, and the Taotai was superseded."

It was, of course, a case of the old, old story which appears in every conceivable variation over all official transactions in China, and which is summed up simply and accurately in the one word "squeeze." The stolid, patient Chinese peasant will stand much before expressing his disapproval, but there were not wanting signs that the people of

Ssŭch'uan were beginning to think of entering their protest. An ingenious method of raising money had for some time been put into force. A special income tax of 3 per cent was being levied on all who possessed an income of more than ten *piculs* of rice. In order to make it clear that this tax was levied in the interests of the taxpayer, it was declared that interest at the rate of 4 per cent would be paid on the sum thus raised, and that when any individual taxpayer's contribution had amounted to 50 *taels* he would be awarded a share in the Ch'êngtu-Hankow railway scheme. This magnificent prospect did not appear to excite the enthusiasm among the taxpayers that was hoped for, and at the time of my arrival at the capital inflammatory placards appeared in the neighbourhood, in which it was pointed out that while taxation was increasing, the interests of the people were being neglected, and amiably concluding, in one case, by offering rewards for all foreigners brought in dead or alive, and by appointing a date for a general attack upon the foreign

population. This incipient display of discontent was capably dealt with by the Viceroy, a single execution proving effective in nipping disturbance in the bud; but it served to show that further burdens would be resented by the people, and the funds for the construction of the Ssŭch'uan railways will be whistled for for many a day to come. By any one who knows China, the value of her avowal that she can build her own railways without having recourse to foreign loans, will be accurately gauged.[1]

[1] According to the latest information the estimated cost of the proposed railway from Ch'êngtu to Hankow is 1,000,000,000 *taels*, and the amount collected 7,000,000 *taels*.

CHAPTER IX.

CH'ÊNGTU TO SUI FU.

I LEFT Ch'êngtu in a rather inferior *kuadza* on December 17th.[1] The price demanded for the six or seven days' journey down the Min river to Sui Fu at its junction with the Yang-tsze was 90 *taels*, and the exorbitant sum finally decided upon was 70 *taels*. The European never seems to have the limitless amount of time at his disposal which the Easterner has, and he is consequently at a hopeless disadvantage when entering upon bargaining operations. As it was, it took me two days of valuable time to reduce the 90 *taels* demanded to 70.

[1] Mr Belt had already left in another direction, and henceforth I travelled alone.

The crew of ten hands received precisely one-tenth of this sum between them, the foreman and helmsman receiving 2000 *cash* each (4s. 4d.) and the ordinary boatmen 800 *cash* each (1s. 7d.) for the journey of seven days,—$2\frac{5}{7}$d. a-day for an able-bodied labourer working from dawn till dark.

By evening on the 18th we tied up at Chang-kou, at the junction of the Ch'êngtu branch of the river and the main stream which comes from Kuan Hsien. This latter place is the headquarters of the vast system of irrigation which gives the Ch'êngtu plain its immense agricultural prosperity, and which dates back over 2000 years. Two Chinese officials, Li the first and Li the second, father and son, are credited with the authorship of this great work, and in their memory two temples stand to this day overlooking the waters which they tamed. "Dig deep the bars; keep low the dykes," is the command given by Li, and carved in stone in the temple standing in his honour; and strange to say, "during the long succession of years since Li's death,

through all the changes of dynasties and political turmoils of which Ssŭch'uan has been the scene, we read in the native history of the province that the annual alternate damming of the rivers and the digging out of their beds—which may be seen in operation to-day in the winter season—has never been pretermitted; and this while throughout the empire generally all the great works of old have been ruined by neglect and suffered to fall into irreparable decay."[1]

Early on the morning of the 21st we reached Chia-ting Fu, a considerable town built on a spit of land running out between the Min and Ya rivers, whose waters unite immediately below the city. Cliffs of red sandstone rise steeply from the water's edge, and these are honeycombed with numbers of Man-tzŭ caves, several of which I entered. The cave-dwelling aborigines are despised by the Chinese, who call them Man-tzŭ or wild people. Facing

[1] 'The Far East,' by Mr Archibald Little. Two papers by Mr Joshua Vale, of the China Inland Mission, deal with these irrigation works in detail. They will be found in the Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xxxiii. (1901) and vol. xxxvi. (1905).

the town a huge Buddha, 304 feet in height, is carved crudely on the cliff, while in dim outline in the distance, looming faintly through the mist, I could just make out the far-famed summit of Mount O-mei, the sacred mountain of Western China.

The town wears an undeniable air of prosperity, and indeed there is said to be much money in the place, many of the rich salt-well owners making it their place of residence. It is also the centre of the white wax industry, and in a large warehouse I saw huge stacks of circular white cakes resembling small millstones. It is used chiefly for candle-making and paper-glazing, though it is also employed in a variety of minor ways—as a coating for medicinal pills, for instance.

Silk is another large industry, and is said to be good and cheap. Large shops open into the streets, in which the weavers may be seen at work. The pay of the workmen is 1 *tael* cent (⅔d.) a foot, and a skilful weaver will do 10 feet in the day, earning 4d. in addition to his board. German aniline dyes are used for colouring the silks, and tins of

A street in Chia-ting Fu.

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these were to be seen on sale. Inquiries among the piece-goods merchants elicited the information that there is a larger demand for black *Italians* than for any other class of the higher quality cotton goods; but I was also told that there was a very considerable demand for a thin striped material of Japanese make. This is much worn in summer and is cheap, a retail merchant only asking me 70 *cash* a foot, this being also the price of the lowest quality Manchester grey shirting sold.

In one of the busiest parts of the town many new and commodious shops were just being completed. A fire had burned down a whole district during the previous summer, and, surrounded by the new buildings, one site remained a charred and blackened rubbish-heap. It was here that the house in which the fire originated had stood, and a rubbish-heap it would remain, for public opinion—a force far stronger than any law—demanded that this should be so, as penalty for the cause of so much damage.

I left Chia-ting Fu on December 22nd, and,

with a strong current behind me, reached Sui Fu early on the afternoon of the 23rd. Here I was welcomed by Mr and Mrs Faers of the China Inland Mission, who entertained me hospitably till I left again on the 26th.

Sui Fu bears an unenviable reputation for crime,—a reputation which, it is to be feared, is only too well founded. The fact that it is situated close to the point of contact of three provinces — Ssŭch'uan, Yün-nan, and Kuei-chow — accounts, no doubt, to some extent for its evil name, since a large proportion of the convictions are for highway robbery. It is the custom of the highwaymen, after committing an offence in one province, to slip across the frontier of one or other of the adjoining provinces, with a view to eluding capture by escaping beyond the jurisdiction of the district in which the crime has been committed. Nevertheless, criminals are brought to book in large numbers, and the magistrate responsible for the administration of the law appeared to be a veritable Judge Jefferies for the severity of his sentences. When calling upon him officially I was kept waiting in my

chair at the entrance to the inner courtyard of his yamen. When the gates were flung open, behold a criminal kneeling on the ground with sturdy lictors standing on either side. My arrival happened to have coincided with the administration of 1000 strokes with the bamboo. At the completion of the first 500 blows, execution was stayed pending my audience, which lasted about twenty minutes, and resumed upon my departure.

My interest in Chinese reformatory methods was sufficiently aroused by this glimpse to induce me to pay an unofficial visit to the yamen courtyard on the following morning, and the insight into Chinese magisterial methods which half an hour's inspection gave me, more than repaid me for my trouble. In the street itself, immediately in front of the courtyard gateway, lay two stiff and twisted corpses, scantily clad in rags and tatters,—two hideous distorted human husks, pitchforked out of the adjacent prison just as they had died during the night. Here they would be left during the day in the hopes that some relative might turn up to claim and bury

them. In the event of no one evincing any desire to perform this last rite for them, they would be disposed of without further ceremony by the authorities. Next I gazed into a cell known as the "Tiger's Mouth." On the securely barred door giving access to this dungeon is depicted a roaring tiger with jaws distended. The gaping throat does actually consist of a circular hole in the panel, perhaps 10 inches in diameter, which acts as a small window to the cell. Inside this chamber dwelt such prisoners as were condemned to life sentences, and who would consequently only emerge again dead or to die at the hands of the executioner. They appeared to be quite happy and contented, and were engaged in carrying on a lucrative trade with the outside world as pawnbrokers. One inmate of many years' standing was said to be worth many thousands of *taels*. Beyond the "Tiger's Mouth" was to be seen a motley collection of minor malefactors, clothed in rags and secured with chains, squatting in unsavoury groups on either side of the gateway. Some were chained together in pairs, and were obliged

to eat, sleep, and have their being in such proximity to one another as a chain 18 inches in length necessitated. One pair of these artificially constructed Siamese twins I met taking a walk in the courtyard. "How long have you been chained together?" I asked. "Two hundred days," was the reply. But perhaps most pitiful of all were four narrow upright cages of wood, each containing a human victim. Amongst these behold my friend of the day before, who, after receiving 1000 strokes with the bamboo, had been caged up. These cages hang from the gateway arch, so that all who pass by may see and jeer. The lid of the cage is of wood, and closes round the victim's neck, which protrudes through a circular hole, the head thus being left outside the cage. A single narrow rung constitutes the floor of the cage, upon which the wretched inmate is constrained to stand hour after hour for the simple reason that if he did not he must infallibly fall through and break his neck. The particular individual in whom I was interested said that he had stood thus all

night, and did not know for how many more days and nights he might have to go on doing so. He was fed by the gaoler, since his hands and arms were inside the cage and his head outside, and communication between the two consequently out of the question. I left appreciating, to some extent, the cheapness of life in China.

An entertainment of a very different sort was provided by the first annual "sports" of the newly established Sui Fu College. From eight in the morning until four in the afternoon a crowd of at least 10,000 onlookers watched and applauded a full programme of keenly contested races. The victors in feats of bodily prowess were the heroes of the day, and this in the heart of a country in which but yesterday the ideal scholar was a literary fossil, with claws on his hands several inches in length, incapable of doing any one thing (except to teach at school) by which he could keep soul and body together.[1] Truly here was a new China with a vengeance.

[1] See Dr Smith's 'Chinese Characteristics,' p. 104.

CHAPTER X.

SUI FU TO YÜN-NAN FU.

THANKS to the kindness of Mr Faers, my preparations for resuming the road once more were soon completed. The smiling hills and valleys of Ssŭch'uan, with its teeming population, its enormously developed agricultural wealth, its vast neglected mineral resources, and its magnificent waterways, lay behind: before me stretched a different land — the rugged gorges and plateaux of Yün-nan, sparsely populated, ill-developed, a land the despair alike of the merchant and the engineer, yet a land which, on account of its geographical position, has succeeded in setting England and France bidding for the privilege of building railways across its rugged surface and striving to build up trade upon its ungracious soil.

From here on, until I reached Burma and civilisation, I proposed to proceed on foot, and on December 26th my party of coolies, chair-bearers, soldiers, and servants—a motley crowd of forty souls in all—moved out of Sui Fu. The first eighteen miles took us up the left bank of the Yang-tsze to the village of An-pien, whence a five days' tramp, during which we followed, as far as the exigencies of gorge and precipice would allow, the turbulent torrent of a tributary from the south, the Ta-kuan Ho, brought us to Lao-wa-t'an, the Customs barrier between Ssŭch'uan and Yün-nan. The road, which perhaps scarcely deserves the unmeasured condemnation which it appears to have called forth from such travellers as have covered it, is a stony, but tolerable, mountain track, which swarmed with coolies carrying skins, hides, copper, and lead from Yün-nan, and salt and cottons from Ssŭch'uan. Large cases of cartridges, too, from Kynoch of Birmingham, were being carried painfully along on the backs of bent and stunted coolies, destined for the troops of Yün-nan Fu. Let those whose enthusiasm has led them to pit

schemes for land communication from Burma cheerfully and without due consideration of all the circumstances against the natural inlet into Western China provided by the Yang-tsze, take note of this.

On the fourth day we crossed the boundary between the two provinces. The Ta-kuan river bored its way through crumpled gorges, cultivation appeared only in tiny patches, and steep slopes of cactus and rank grass took the place of the terraced hillsides of Ssŭch'uan. The district was said to be infested by robbers, who find this wild borderland of three provinces—Ssŭch'uan, Yün-nan and Kuei-chow—a convenient field for carrying on their predatory occupation. And as if to confirm the rumours with which we were regaled, there in front of us, on rounding a corner, appeared three brigands in the flesh, heavily chained and travelling under escort of three rugged soldiers to the little town of Ta-kuan, where, so we were informed, several executions had already taken place.

Lao-wa-t'an consists simply of a long straggling street, at the end of which the

route crosses the river by a fair bridge. It would be difficult to find a better situation for a Customs barrier, for the valley up which the road lies is so narrow and the mountain-sides so precipitous that it would be wellnigh impossible for laden coolies to travel by any other route. The distance from Sui Fu may be taken as not more than 76 miles,—an estimate which I arrived at by allowing an average of 3 miles to the hour as my speed while actually walking. Mr Little, who travelled over this road in 1904, makes the distance 80 miles; Consul Bourne, in his section of the report of the Blackburn Commercial Mission, 111 miles; and Messrs Neville and Bell, in their section of the same report, 137 miles. One does not look for mathematical accuracy in Western China, but there would seem to be a quite inexcusable difference of opinion here. The probability is that the members of the Mission translated the Chinese *li* into miles, a *li* in this part of China being generally considered to be the equivalent of a quarter of an English mile. But this method is productive of incorrect results, because, as

every one who has travelled in Western China ought to know, the *li* is not bound by the limitations of the ordinary standard of linear measurement, but is affected to no small extent by the nature of the ground which it purports to measure. Thus, though it may be 3000 *li* from Lao-wa-t'an to Sui Fu, it does not in the least follow that it is 3000 *li* from Sui Fu to Lao-wa-t'an, the explanation of this apparent mathematical contradiction being provided by the fact that it is up-hill one way and down-hill the other. Time as well as distance has a direct bearing on the nature of the *li*, and since it takes longer to travel up-hill from A to B than it does to travel down-hill from B to A, there must obviously be a greater number of *li* between A and B than there are between B and A. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

On New Year's day 1907 I left the temple at Lao-wa-t'an, which had seemed to be a degree less dirty than the inn, and which I had consequently occupied for the night, and crossing the suspension bridge climbed to the summit of a mountain spur over which the track passes, in order to avoid the extra

distance caused by a big bend in the river. Henceforth pack-ponies competed with coolies, and not far from the summit of the pass towards which we were climbing, an unwary animal with a load of copper lost his footing on the stone-paved track, which was rendered as slippery as ice by mist and rain, and crashed head foremost down the hillside. A descent on the far side, similar to the ascent, brought us back to the Ta-kuan river, and to the little hamlet of Tou-sha-kuan, where I spent the night. All round, grey-blue limestone rose in sharp fantastic peaks, closing in the valley and defying even a Chinaman to cultivate their slopes. There is, indeed, little to appeal to the casual traveller along this route, and for four more days I experienced the monotony of the barren defiles of the Ta-kuan river, halting for the nights at the villages of Chi-li-pu, Ta-wan-tzu, and Ta-kuan Ting.

About ten miles beyond Ta-kuan Ting we were confronted with a steep hillside, walling in the end of the valley, at the foot of which the river issued from a subterranean

passage. At the summit of this natural barrier we were at last clear of the prison valley of the Ta-kuan Ho, and on the rim of the great central plateau of Yün-nan. The sun shone from a clear sky, and behind and below us we looked back upon the grey pall of cloud which broods over the lower regions of Ssŭch'uan. We were, in all truth, at last in Yün-nan—the land "south of the clouds." Two miles over a flat, peaty, grass-covered table-land, hedged in between ranges of mountains, brought us to the tiny village of Wu-chai, 6000 feet above the sea. From here, a march of about twenty-two miles over a level plain, except for one mountain-ridge of no very great height, brought me on the morrow to Chao-t'ung Fu, a moderate-sized town situated in the centre of an agricultural plain. I made the distance from Sui Fu 160 miles—but 160 miles of gaping chasm and frowning precipice, which it had taken us twelve days to cover. Here I was hospitably entertained by Dr and Mrs Savin of the Bible Christian Mission, and right glad I was to find myself

for a brief space enjoying the comfort and cleanliness of an English home and the pleasant society of fellow-countrymen.

The country all round looks bare and brown, plough land, some of which is irrigated, covering the plain. On all sides, filling in the distance, rise mountains of a ruddy-coloured soil. Maize is the chief grain produced, and as soon as it is harvested, poppy is sown. This is, of course, by far the most valuable crop which the province produces, Yün-nan opium having a particularly good name; and the farmers were said to be in a state of nervous irritation owing to a belief on their part that the authorities were actually thinking of taking steps to reduce the cultivation of the poppy, in accordance with the recently issued proclamation at Peking. Nor was this reflex of the anti-opium movement—of which more anon—the only symptom of that curious, indefinable, yet palpable process of change which is making itself apparent even in the most remote corners of the Chinese empire, and which promises "nothing short of the complete renovation of the oldest, most popu-

lous, and most conservative of empires."[1] For pamphlets, compiled by Yün-nan students who had studied in Japan, had been recently distributed exhorting their fellow-countrymen to treat strangers and foreigners with all respect, but at the same time to make themselves strong, and to resist strenuously encroachments upon their province from without. France, it was pointed out, was a dangerous neighbour, who was even now constructing a railway into the heart of Yün-nan. Let them see to it that no more such concessions were granted to foreign Powers.

I was obliged to spend a day at Chao-t'ung Fu bargaining with my men. A thousand mule-loads of ammunition were being sent through to the capital, with the result that transport was scarce and prices high. Eventually I came to terms with the men who had accompanied me from Sui Fu to take me to Yün-nan Fu, 5 *taels*—roughly 15s.—being the price agreed upon for the chair-bearers, and a trifle less for the ordinary coolies, for the thirteen days' march.

[1] 'The Awakening of China'—Dr Martin.

On January 8th, a short fifteen miles across level plain brought me to the hamlet of Tao Yuan, or "the spring among the peach-trees," —an attractive but singularly delusive title. Indications of famine, which had recently laid a heavy hand upon the province, were to be seen in a series of proclamations which warned the people, under pain of severe punishment, to save up their grain, and not to waste it in the making of spirit.

I had now travelled for two days over the so-called Yün-nan plateau, and for these two whole days I was happy in my belief that the journey before me was to consist of a succession of pleasant marches over a comparatively level table-land, with an average altitude of from 6000 to 7000 feet. It was on January 9th that this illusion began to be dispelled. During the morning we climbed steadily up-hill to the summit of a pass 8000 feet above sea-level, and then dropped headlong some 3600 feet to the bottom of a wild and desolate valley, along which brawled and bubbled the Niu-lan river on its way to join the Yang-tsze to the north-west,—a rise and

Coolie transport in Yün-nan.

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fall of between 5000 and 6000 feet in sixteen miles. Moreover, rising in rugged defiance in front of us was another range, the lowest point in which touched upwards of 7000 feet. "Talk of railways by this route," ejaculated Sir Alexander Hosie when he reached the valley of the Niu-lan twenty years before; "as well talk of railways to the moon"—and I felt moved to agree with him.

At the summit of the pass looking down upon the Niu-lan river, where two or three miserable hovels stood huddled together, were posted imperial proclamations, in accordance with the Chifu Agreement arising out of the murder of Mr Margary in 1875, adjuring the people to be civil and friendly to foreigners. The people of Chiang-ti, the village on the precipitous banks of the Niu-lan at which I was to halt for the night, showed their friendship for me by refusing the messenger, whom I had sent on, accommodation, and intimating that they wished to have no truck with the "foreign devil." The official at Chao-t'ung Fu, either by accident or by design, had omitted to send me the customary escort, and with-

out this material manifestation of authority to awe the populace I was constrained to put up with such quarters as I could get, and to spend a disturbed night in the midst of a crowd of brawling and quarrelsome coolies and muleteers, who gambled and fought by turn until finally lulled to slumber by the soothing fumes of the opium-pipe.

At 7000 feet we reached the summit of the range on the south side of the Niu-lan river, and then dropped again into an open, flat-bottomed valley, well cultivated, at the end of which stands the village of I-che-hsun, where I spent the night. For the next two days we picked our way through a tumbled labyrinth of brick-red mountains, patched with pine, walnut, and the "wax-tree." Sometimes we descended abruptly hundreds of feet to flat-bottomed valleys possessing neither entrance nor exit, with the result that we had almost immediately to climb hundreds of feet up again in order to get out on the other side. This is the country of "alternating bare, wind-swept downs and precipitous cañons," an inhospitable land, miles upon

miles of which may be traversed with not so much as a house to be seen, through which the Blackburn Commercial Mission passed in 1897. Their comment is pathetic: "On March 31st, we travelled twenty-five miles without seeing a village. And there was no work for us to do — a commercial mission in the Sahara. In truth, from Lao-wa-t'an to K'ung-shan the country is at present of no possible value for commerce. The people are very poor, and clad exclusively—when clad at all—in Sha-shih cotton cloth; but they can scarcely afford sufficient clothing." It was a relief to drop, on January 12th, from a high range to the long and well-cultivated valley in which lies the city of Tung-ch'uan Fu, the second place worthy of the name of town between Sui Fu and Yün-nan Fu. The distance between Chao-t'ung Fu and Tung-ch'uan Fu is mentioned by Morrison as 110 miles; but my own estimate was 83 miles. The valley wore quite an air of prosperity after the bleak uplands over which we had been travelling. Wild-blossom gave the land an appearance

of approaching spring, irrigated fields filled the valley bottom, wild-duck circled overhead, and cranes stood demurely and contentedly in the soaking paddy-fields.

Once again I found myself indebted to the members of the Bible Christian Mission, for I received a warm welcome and a cordial invitation from Mr and Mrs Dymond. There was no great stock of foreign goods to be seen in the town, Indian yarn constituting the chief article of consumption in this category, a good deal of weaving being carried on in the district. Here, too, as at Chao-t'ung, the spirit of reform stalked abroad. Celebrations had been held at the time of the edict promising a Constitution, and political speeches had been made. The humiliating treatment of the Chinese in America was graphically, if not too accurately, described, and one young student, fresh from the modern college at Yün-nan Fu, roundly denounced the corruption of the local yamen! Verily the old order changeth.

On the 13th I left Tung-ch'uan Fu and marched for twenty miles over fairly level

ground to the foot of a high range to the south. In front of us lay the highest pass on the route, and we halted for the night with the prospect of a climb to 10,000 feet on the morrow. A sharp frost gave a bite to the air as we started, but when the sun broke through the thick white mist which hung over the earth it was pleasant enough.

Both my chair-bearers and the coolies made slow headway up the steep mountain track, and in company with a yamen-runner, who had been sent to escort me by the magistrate at Tung-ch'uan Fu, I was soon far ahead. I had travelled, so far, with little trouble for some hundreds of miles in innermost China, but at length the monotony of my daily and uneventful progress was to be rudely interrupted. I was struggling and panting in the thin dry air, when the yamen-runner, who had dropped behind, came running up gesticulating wildly. Here was a predicament. The man appeared to be rapidly going mad in his wild endeavours to make me understand something—but what? I stood gazing at him in blank astonishment when

one of my chair-bearers appeared upon the scene covered with dust and perspiration. Things were beginning to get exciting, and it began to dawn upon me from his pantomime that all was not well. Back down the hill I reluctantly turned,—not altogether, be it admitted, without an uneasy feeling of misgiving,—when he seized me by the arm and pointed down below. I whipped out my glasses, and there, half a mile away, an angry crowd of men, among whom I saw my chair swaying unsteadily to and fro on the very brink of a precipice, were indubitably engaged in fierce altercation. Sticks were being plied, and stones were flying, and I stood wondering what to do when chair-bearer number two came struggling up towards us. With a look of understanding and a muttered word, both men took to their heels and incontinently fled. I seized my only remaining companion by the arm, and after explaining as forcibly as I could by sign and gesture, freely intermingled with good sound English adjuration, that he stood for the material expression of

law and order, despatched him to deal with the mob below, and decided to await eventualities where I was. Exhaustion on the part of the men, combined with the sudden appearance upon the scene of the yamen-runner in official uniform, produced a salutary effect, and before long my own men, followed by the yamen-runner with a number of strangers in tow, came slowly and rather shamefacedly up the hill. With the arrival a little later of Joe, I soon got a general idea of what had occurred. On the track a string of primitive bullock-carts, consisting of two solid wooden wheels upon the axle of which a rough wooden framework was superimposed, were slowly wending their way. These unwieldy conveyances completely blocked the way, and by no means short of actual force, it appeared, could their owners be made to understand that my party wished to pass by. Result: force *was* resorted to, my men pushing their way past, and thereby upsetting one of the carts, which crashed down the precipice into a chasm several hundreds

of feet below. The next minute a general *mêlée* ensued, the only weapons handy—sticks and stones—being made free use of.

The case was seemingly simple, and was not necessarily due to anti-foreign feeling as I had at first feared might be the case, and I immediately decided to hold an extemporised court of justice there and then. Seating myself, with Joe at my side, on a slight eminence, I motioned to the contending parties to come round. Needless to say, this gathering was soon swelled by every fresh traveller upon the road, until there was a very respectable concourse. As I had not seen the accident myself, and both sides vociferously declared their innocence, I had to assume that blame was evenly distributed. On demanding the value of a cart, and being informed by the carter that a new one would cost him at least a *tael* and a half—*i.e.*, between 4s. and 5s.—I delivered judgment, translated sentence by sentence by Joe.

"I should present the man with *Tls.* 1½ to cover the loss which he had sustained. *But*, I could not have my servants beaten and

maltreated on the highroad, therefore I would take the names, places of residence, and destination of the offenders. On this occasion I would say no more of their conduct; but as they, like myself, were travelling to Yün-nan Fu, I should have ample opportunity of watching their conduct for the remainder of the way, and if I noticed the slightest attempt at similar misconduct I should have the offenders delivered up at the first magisterial yamen for condign punishment." Having delivered this harangue and taken the names of the offenders, I handed *Tls.* 1½ to the owner of the lost cart, and declared the case dismissed. I congratulated myself on having successfully administered British justice under somewhat trying circumstances, and finding the day passing, took lunch where I was. What was my surprise to find the decision I had come to entirely upset by the refusal of the carter to accept the money. A dozen times I handed it to him, and as many times I received it back. All he begged was that I would consider the case closed. It subsequently trans-

pired that the man had been advised by his friends to accept no compensation for his cart, lest afterwards he should be charged with robbery at the yamen. Truly an instructive sidelight on the methods of the upper classes in China! So my attempt at British justice had after all miscarried: they feared the foreign devil—*et dona ferentem.*

For the rest of the day I toiled over range after range of brick-red mountain, relieved from complete desolation by scrub and pine-woods. The two chair-bearers who had fled earlier in the day turned up in the afternoon, and just as I was upbraiding them for their cowardice, a tremendous holloaing came echoing across the elevated plain over which I was travelling. Excitement number two! This time, however, the explanation was not a disagreeable one. As I looked up to see what was the matter, two great wolves came bounding over the plain not a hundred yards from where I stood. In hot pursuit came a dog, while just beyond was a shepherd with his flock, yelling like mad, in which he was joined cheerfully and vociferously by every one in

sight. The wolves, however, had the legs of their pursuer, and were soon out of sight over a neighbouring hilltop. We spent the night at the village of Lai-tou-p'o.

Two more days we travelled over endless mountains, but on the third emerged on to something more nearly approaching to a plateau—*i.e.*, a fairly level high land with an elevation of something over 6000 feet. Cultivation increased steadily as we approached the wide plain in the midst of which the capital stands, villages became more frequent, and farmsteads were to be seen dotted about in favourable localities. From the village of Yang-kai, where we had spent the night of the 17th, we left the track, and striking across a well-irrigated and well-cultivated plain in a south-eastern direction, joined the main road from Wei-ning Chou to the capital. From Yang-lin, our stage of the 18th, a march of sixteen miles over a heath-like country of red soil covered with pine and scrub brought me to the village of Ta-pan Chiao, whence an easy march of twelve miles brought me to the capital on the 20th.

I was at last at the end of my wearisome journey over the main road from Ssŭch'uan and the Upper Yang-tsze to the capital of Yün-nan —a journey which had occupied a period of twenty-six days, out of which I had actually been marching twenty-five, and which had taken me over a route which may undoubtedly claim the distinction of being the most difficult and the most inhospitable of all the routes which serve as the main lines of communication in this part of China. Until the mineral wealth which it possesses is properly and systematically developed, this portion of Yün-nan can be of no commercial value, nor can I imagine any line of country less likely to excite the enthusiasm of the railway engineer. Indeed, such lines as have been suggested avoid altogether that part of the route over which I travelled which lies between Chao-t'ung Fu and Yün-nan Fu, a more feasible though still very difficult alignment between the two places lying east by Chu-tsing, Süan Wei, and Wei-ning Chou. The most buoyant report of which I have knowledge is that of an Italian engineer, who talks of a line of 650 *kilometres*, with a gradient, except

in the case of two colls, of only 15 in 1000, and at the two mentioned colls of 25 in 1000, to be constructed at an estimated cost of £10,000 a *kilometre*. M. Doumer, late Governor-General of Indo-China, the vastness of whose ambitions was only equalled by the magnificent flights of his imagination, declared, as the result of a hurried survey by the officers of his Public Works Department in 1899, that "there were serious reasons for thinking that in seeking to attain first of all Sui Fu, in preference to Ch'ung-k'ing, his engineers had chosen the most convenient route, and, perhaps, the only one that was practicable." The members of the Yün-nan Company's Commission selected the route from Yün-nan Fu *viâ* Chu-tsing, Süan Wei, and Wei-ning Chou, whence *viâ* Chao-t'ung Fu to Sui Fu, or *viâ* Pitsie and Yung-ning to Na-ch'i, though neither alternative, it was admitted, could be described as anything but difficult. While the rival engineers of Europe were thus pondering sorrowfully upon the difficulties of a Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan railway, an element of humour was introduced by the Chinese, who calmly declared

that they intended surveying and building the line themselves, with which object in view they opened an office in 1905. Money was to be subscribed by private individuals taking shares, by increasing the selling price of Government salt, by raising the land-tax, and by the institution of lotteries. Strange to say, this proposition does not seem to have been taken very seriously by any one except the Chinese themselves, and in the summer of 1906 an Anglo-French Association came into being with the object of constructing a series of lines —viz., Canton-Hankow, Hankow-Ch'êngtu, and Ch'êngtu-Yün-nan Fu. For myself, I am not inclined to envy the shareholders in any future Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan railway. The members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission doubted whether a railway "that would be able to transport goods or minerals at a lower rate than the pack-animal could be constructed through a country presenting so many obstacles to the engineer as does this." Even if it could, where is it going to find the goods to transport? Enthusiasts have pointed triumphantly to the long strings of coolies and pack-

ponies that they have encountered on the road; but how many pack-ponies go to one train? And where the pack-ponies take from three weeks to a month, a train would cover the distance in from two to three days; and assuming that the present system of transport meets the demand, what is the train to carry during the remainder of the month? The fact is, that such schemes have been put forward on the assumption that the products of Ssŭch'uan would pour along a railway over the whole length of Yün-nan, instead of following, as they always have done, the natural line of communication provided by the Yang-tsze river,—an assumption which appears to me to be likely to prove singularly incorrect. But with the question of railways as a whole I propose to deal in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

YÜN-NAN FU.

I SPENT a pleasant ten days in Yün-nan Fu as the guest of Mr Wilkinson, H.B.M. Consul-General for the two provinces of Yün-nan and Kuei-chow. Some day, when the railway from Tonking is completed as far as Yün-nan Fu, a British consulate is to be built on a pleasant site, already carefully marked out by Mr Wilkinson outside the city walls: for the present the representative of Great Britain resides in a modest Chinese house inside the city wall. Picturesque temples, hidden away in the surrounding mountains, provided an object for many a pleasant expedition, in which we were joined by the representative of France and by M. Barbézieux and his charming family, who occupied the position of doctor attached to

the French consulate. Nor must I omit to mention the hospitable members of the China Inland Mission.

Compared with the capital of Ssŭch'uan, Yün-nan Fu is a poor affair. Poverty is as conspicuous a feature of the one as is prosperity of the other. The walls are solid, and, as is not infrequently the case in Chinese cities, the most conspicuous feature of the city; but they enclose a space of no very great extent, and cannot be more than three miles in circumference. A few rusty cannon lay strewn about on their summit, upon one of which I deciphered the unlooked-for superscription I.H.S. —a relic bearing witness to the mechanical genius of some forgotten Jesuit father.

Outside the city walls stands an imposing pagoda, built somewhat prematurely by one Ts'en Yü-ying to celebrate prospective victories over France; but more interesting perhaps at the present day, and infinitely more surprising, is a neatly laid-out station, with railway embankments curling away across the plain,—a forerunner of the line which France is pushing forward with dogged determination from

the south. The bulk of the foreign goods that reach Yün-nan Fu already come through Indo-China *viâ* Lao-kai on the frontier and Mêng-tzŭ, though a certain proportion travels *viâ* the Yang-tsze and Sui Fu, and in one shop I found piece-goods which had come across from Burma *viâ* Tali Fu. Very little merchandise, however, reaches Yün-nan Fu from Burma at the present time. Cheap black *Italians* and figured lastings were on view, as well as the ordinary grey shirting, and were said to have a fair sale. Cheap furniture prints were also in stock. But it is cotton yarn that provides the chief importation from abroad, Indian, and latterly Tonkingese, yarn being readily purchased and woven by the people into a strong coarse cloth known as *yang-sha-pu.* According to the late Mr Litton, by whose sudden death while travelling near T'eng Yüeh in 1895 his country sustained a wellnigh irreparable loss, the great centre of the local weaving industry is the Hsin Hsing valley, three days south of Yün-nan Fu, where 40,000 *piculs*[1] of yarn are disposed of annually. My experience goes to show that

[1] 40,000 *piculs* = 47,619 cwt.

the weaving of foreign yarns into strong, loosely-knit cloth by the Chinese is an increasing industry, and is likely to continue to be so. The people have come to realise the advantage of buying the cheap machine-made yarns of India and Japan; and so far back as 1897 the members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission observed a placard on the walls of Yün-nan Fu, issued by a benevolent institution, exhorting women and girls to learn the art of weaving foreign yarn, quoting Confucian scripture to prove it was their duty, and, what would doubtless be more effective, showing by arithmetic that it was a profitable undertaking. So long as the mass of the people remain steeped in their present poverty, the less durable machine-made cloths from the looms of Lancashire will have little chance of competing with the *yang-sha-pu*. Moreover, the *yang-sha-pu* is made in widths (14 inches) which entail a minimum of waste when cut up for Chinese clothes, whereas the broader widths of English cloths necessitate no small waste, — a matter of vast importance to the frugal and needy Chinaman.

In company with my host I called upon the Viceroy, a genial but pitifully weak ruler of the name of Ting.[1] I expressed much interest in the opium and railway questions, but his Excellency passed by both these questions and professed immense interest in the fact that I was unmarried, indulging in absorbing speculations as to the rank and virtues of the lady whom he prophesied my parents would select for me on my return to my native land. Both opium and railways are at present embarrassing subjects in the yamens of Western China. The former, like the latter, deserves special consideration, and will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Quite apart from reform in the matter of opium-smoking and railway construction, I found reform as indicated by the expression "China for the Chinese" pervading the atmosphere of the capital. France was already building a railway from her possessions in Indo-China to the very heart of the province; a French railway station stood even now cheek

[1] He has since been succeeded by Hsi Liang, late Viceroy of Ssŭch'uan.

Soldiers of Yün-nan.

by jowl with the very walls of the capital, a perpetual blister upon the temper of young Yün-nan; a French school, established by the Governor-General of Indo-China, and at the expense of that colony, was teaching some eighty Chinese students the language and the ways of France; and now Great Britain was scheming to lay hold of some part of Western China by constructing railways from Burma to Tali Fu. Such things should not be: so said the young reforming party, and a board came into being with the object of frustrating all further encroachments—it was recognised that the concession to France could not now be altered—under the title at first of "The Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan," and subsequently "The Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan-T'eng Yüeh Railway Co.," pledged to survey and undertake all necessary railways themselves. English and French alike were undoubtedly *anathema maranatha* to the young Yün-nan party.

Among the people generally the English were not disliked, such English travellers as have visited the province having almost invariably left a good impression behind them.

I do not think the same can conscientiously be said of the French. Nothing could be more tactful or more correct than the attitude of the representatives of France whom I found at the capital; but throughout the province there was undoubtedly a feeling of distrust and suspicion of the ambitions and aspirations of that country. Nor can its official representatives claim complete immunity from blame. It was M. François, French Consul-General,—happily Consul-General no longer,—who in the summer of 1900 was responsible for a serious anti-foreign riot. Contrary to the laws of China, M. François crossed the frontier from Indo-China to Yün-nan with forty cases of arms and ammunition. Hokow, at which place was posted a French commissioner of Customs, was safely passed, but at Mêng-tzŭ the then commissioner passed the Consul-General's personal baggage but expressed a desire to examine such cases as he was taking to Yün-nan Fu for others. M. François blustered and carried off his goods by force, and reached the *likin*-station at the gates of the capital. Here his baggage was detained under

orders from the Viceroy, who having received information to the effect that arms and ammunition were being smuggled in, despatched two prefects to examine it. The impetuous Frenchman drew his revolver upon the Chinese officers, thereby grossly affronting two Chinese gentlemen engaged upon a perfectly legitimate and necessary duty, and incidentally raising a wild storm of outraged Chinese humanity about the ears of the entire foreign population. Thanks to the firm attitude of the Viceroy under extremely trying circumstances, no lives were lost, and the European population was brought safely under a strong escort to the frontier. Thus was a serious international situation created by the unwarranted procedure of an obstinate and impetuous Frenchman. Yet M. François was reappointed Consul-General, a letter of apology wrung from the Viceroy, the two prefects deprived of their official rank, and a large indemnity extracted! And M. Paul Doumer thinks the French are popular in Yün-nan. "The engineers, officers, doctors," he declared, "whom Indo-China sent to Yün-nan, had for express direction, over

and above their special task, to attach the people to themselves and to make loved the name of France. They have fully succeeded," he added.

The whole question of railway construction in Yün-nan has become a long story, involving as it does the rival schemes and pretensions of England and France, and the new attitude of self-assertion on the part of China, and will be dealt with at the conclusion of a brief account of my journey on from Yün-nan Fu to the Burmese frontier. It will be convenient, however, if, before embarking on the narrative of the remainder of my journey, I here interpose a chapter on a question of burning interest to Western China—namely, the question of the suppression of the opium traffic.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OPIUM QUESTION.

THE Chinese Government have set their hand to a task in comparison with which the whole twelve labours of Hercules pale into insignificance. To root out in a period of ten years the insidious vice of opium-smoking, which on their own showing has laid its palsied touch upon no less than 40 per cent of a population computed at 400,000,000, is an undertaking which may well stagger the imagination of even the most visionary of moral reformers. Yet this is the modest proposition advanced by the issue of a simple edict on the 20th of September 1906:—

"It is hereby commanded that within a period of ten years the evils arising from

foreign and native opium be equally and completely eradicated. Let the Government Council frame such measures as may be suitable and necessary for strictly forbidding the consumption of the drug and the cultivation of the poppy, and let them submit their proposals for our approval."

Most people who have any personal knowledge of China and the opium traffic will be disposed to concur with his Majesty's Minister at Peking when he declared that the proposition set forth in this pithy exhortation constitutes a reform of a character "rarely attempted with success in the course of history."

That, however, is the business of the Chinese Government, and the question which Great Britain has to consider is not so much the magnitude of the task to which China has set her hand, as the manner in which she can best aid her in her laudable endeavours to eradicate what is admittedly an immense evil. With the introduction of the vicious opium habit the British had nothing to do; but it is not denied that British traders did not hesitate

to supply the demand for the drug which they found in China from the prolific poppy-fields of India. Opium in India is at the present day a Government monopoly, and India sends to China 50,000 *piculs*[1] of opium a-year; let it, then, be asserted as emphatically as it can be, that the Government of India is in duty bound to take such steps in the regulation of her opium traffic as are, in the opinion of competent authorities, best calculated to have the maximum effect in bringing to an end the vicious habit among the Chinese people. This appears to me to be axiomatic, whether the question be looked at from a moral point of view, or from the less altruistic point of view of the expediency of giving some outward and visible sign of our declared policy of cementing the ties of friendship between the Governments and peoples of the two countries; and that public opinion in Great Britain is alive to its responsibilities is clear from the resolution passed unanimously by the House of Commons on May 30th, 1906, affirming its conviction that the Indo-Chinese opium trade is morally inde-

[1] A *picul* = 133⅓ lb.

fensible, and requesting his Majesty's Government to take steps to bring it to a speedy close. Having arrived at this conclusion, it behoves us to come to a decision as to the method of procedure best calculated to assist towards the attainment of the desired end—namely, the gradual but, if possible, complete eradication of the vice from China. In order to form a rational opinion upon this point, some understanding of the feelings of the Chinese upon the question, both in the past and at the present time, is essential.

Opium-smoking was introduced into China from Java early in the eighteenth century, and has steadily grown in favour among the people until at the present day the habit has undoubtedly assumed immense proportions. In the early days some efforts seem to have been made by the central Government to suppress the vice, but of late years no attention has been paid to the original edicts penalising the habit, nor, until the past two years, have any steps been taken by the Government to deal with the evil. Indeed, the members of the Philippine Commission reported in 1905

that "certain of the high officials who wrote the most eloquent letters condemnatory of the opium traffic, and appealing to foreign nations to prevent its introduction into China, are believed to have steadily increased the areas under opium cultivation in their own domains," and they also learned that "one provincial official who endeavoured to forbid the use of opium in his province was removed by the Imperial Government." The members of the commission spoke with knowledge, but not so every one who feels called upon to talk glibly, if ignorantly, upon the opium question. Just as there are some people who really believe that *opium*, and not *insolence*, was the cause of the so-called "opium war," so there are those who appear to be under the impression that all that is necessary to bring about the abolition of the opium curse in China is to place an embargo upon the import into that country of the drug from India. "Our sin against China could be ended at one stroke if Britain would pay the cost," wrote the Rev. Eric Lewis in 'The Church Missionary Review' for May 1908. That may be, but what I am

concerned with, and what every one who is considering the good of China in the matter is concerned with, is the question, Would the immediate abolition of the importation of Indian opium into China be calculated to render easier for the Chinese Government the task of stamping out the vice? In my humble opinion it most certainly would not, and for this excellent reason, that opium, being a very profitable commodity to produce, an immediate and largely enhanced demand for the native drug created by the sudden cessation of supply from India would, despite all laws and regulations to the contrary, inevitably give an immense stimulus to production in the vast poppy-fields of China itself. This contention is based upon intercourse with officials and people in Western China, and upon personal observation. Let me invite the attention of those interested to the following facts.

China herself produces, on the admission of Tong Shao-yi, the most eager advocate of the suppression of the vice, ten times as much opium as she imports—*i.e.*, 3000 tons against 300 tons. When at Ichang I

was obliged to pick my way among piles of cases of Yün-nan and Ssŭch'uan opium which had come down from the poppy-fields of the west, and it has been estimated by Sir Alexander Hosie that the province of Ssŭch'uan alone "annually produces more than double the quantity of Indian opium introduced into the whole of China."[1] Western China is, in fact, a dominating factor in the situation, since the two provinces of Ssŭch'uan and Yün-nan—it is said that half the arable area of the latter is under opium—are the largest-producing centres of the drug in China, and since its cultivation is the source of considerable wealth to their people, and, be it added, to their officials also.

That Indian opium is to all intents and purposes unknown in Western China is an indisputable fact. "Two decimal four *piculs* of Patna opium," wrote the Commissioner of Customs at Ichang in his report for 1906,

[1] The official estimate of the production of the province of Ssŭch'uan at the present time is given in the paper presented to Parliament in February 1908 [Cd. 3881] as 200,000 *piculs*, or approximately *four times* the amount of Indian opium imported into the whole of China.

"a direct import from Hong Kong, is worth noting in view of the fact that *foreign opium has hitherto been practically unknown here. It is understood, however, that the result of the tentative shipment has not been encouraging to the importer.*" Here, then, is a vast area grievously addicted to the vice which would not be affected in the smallest degree by the cessation of the importation of the drug from India. Whatever may have been the case in the past, there is no doubt whatsoever that it is in the immense production in China itself that is to be found the root of the evil at the present time. Nothing short of a drastic campaign against the habit by the local authorities will have the slightest effect in checking the evil here; but the fact that the said local authorities, already heavily squeezed by the central Government and hard put to it to carry on their duties in addition to providing their own emoluments, draw large sums from the opium traffic, holds out little enough prospect of their engaging in a war of extermination against

In the province of Yün-nan.

"It is said that half the arable area of Yün-nan is under opium."

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it. In Ch'êngtu it was found in 1902 that there were no less than 7500 opium dens, or one den to every 67 of a population of half a million; and 1000 *cash* a-month was the sum extracted from each den by the provincial governing body. "Much of the land," we are told by a recent traveller in Kan-su, "upon which opium is grown is in the hands of magistrates and even higher officials,"[1] and I have shown in an earlier chapter that 50 acres under the poppy means an income exceeding by something like 780,000 *cash* the income which would be derived by the owner from the same area under wheat. Perhaps the most striking example of what the cultivation of the poppy means to the people in these parts is provided by a statement made to me by the President of the Piece-Goods Guild in Sui Fu. In 1905, I was told, the trade in grey shirtings and cotton *Italians* done between Sui Fu and Yün-nan amounted to 60,000 *taels*, whereas, owing to the failure of the Yün-nan opium crop in the spring of

[1] 'In the Footsteps of Marco Polo,' by Colonel C. D. Bruce.

1906, the same trade in that year amounted to only 30,000 *taels*.[1] In parts of Ssŭch'uan I found the people jubilant at the prospect of a campaign against the drug from India. But why? Because they were anxious to fight and stamp out the evil? Because they were yearning to come to the rescue of "the desolate homes, the weeping mothers, the fathers crying, 'O! Absalom, my son, my son,' the degraded wives, the ragged children, the starving households, the fiendish men, the wretched women, the poor suffering sons and daughters of sorrow"?[2] Certainly

[1] Cf. Report of the Blackburn Commercial Mission, Consul F. S. A. Bourne's section, ch. iv., p. 89: "The Lin-ngan merchants pay for their purchases by consignments of opium or of tin. . . . Their capacity to purchase foreign goods is directly measured by the value of opium and tin they can export. A common way of carrying out this exchange of products is to send opium overland to Wu-chow for sale, to take payment at Wu-chow in bills on Hong Kong to buy Lancashire cottons and yarn to be imported here, chiefly *viâ* Tongking."

[2] The Rev. H. C. Du Bose. I have no wish to underestimate the evils of opium-smoking, but I am compelled to point out that absurdly exaggerated language is frequently used as to the effects of the habit indulged in in moderation. My coolies in Ssŭch'uan carried loads of 133 lb. each, and marched from twenty to thirty miles

not; but because they perceived that the demand for their own opium would be greater—because they, in place of the importer from abroad, would be enabled to administer the drug to "the poor suffering sons and daughters of sorrow" to the extent of precisely one-tenth more than they were doing at the present time.

The most urgent of all reforms, then, is the gradual suppression, with a view to final extinction, of the production of the drug in China itself. The Chinese are, of course, quite alive to this, and have drawn up and issued a set of regulations not the least important of which is the one dealing with the home production. In order to reduce the area under cultivation, all magistrates are charged to investigate and make returns of the land under the poppy in their districts. No new land may, under penalty, be sown with the poppy, while certificates are to be issued for all land

a-day. Every one of them smoked opium daily, but I could detect no signs of "undermined constitutions and impaired health."

given up to its cultivation, and the proprietor to be compelled to reduce the area by one-ninth every year and to substitute other crops. Confiscation of land by the State to be the penalty for non-compliance.

Drastic regulations are laid down for dealing with the smokers. All officials, gentry, and literati are to be compelled to give up the habit, to act as an example. Officials of over sixty years of age, however, are to be treated leniently. Officials of high rank and title to ask for a given time in which to break the habit, and to be relieved by an acting official during that period. Officials of lower rank to be allowed six months. Teachers, scholars, officers, and warrant officers in the army and navy, if addicted to the vice, to be dismissed within three months. For the general public the following regulations have been drawn up. A smoker must report himself at the nearest yamen and there fill in a form giving his name, age, address, occupation, and daily allowance of opium. He will then be given a licence, and if under sixty years of age a

limit will be placed upon the amount he is allowed to consume, to be reduced yearly by from 20 per cent to 30 per cent. On becoming a total abstainer he must produce a guarantee signed by a relative or neighbour, when his licence will be cancelled. No new licences will be issued after the first inquisition, and severe penalties will be inflicted upon any one smoking without a licence.

Strong measures are to be taken to limit the facilities for indulging in the habit. Eating-houses are to be prohibited from furnishing opium, and customers from bringing smoking apparatus with them into such places. In the space of one year all shops for the sale of smoking accessories are to close, and six months is the limit placed upon the lives of all opium dens. Shops for the sale of the drug are to be provided with licences, and returns of the amount sold to be made annually to the magistrate of the district. All shops still in existence at the expiration of ten years to be summarily closed. Further, anti-opium societies

are to be established, though it is pointed out that such societies are to confine their activities strictly to the reduction of opium, and not to indulge in the discussion of current politics or questions of local government; and finally, the local authorities are exhorted to take the lead in the great crusade. Representations are then to be made to the British Government inviting them to effect an annual reduction in the importation of Indian opium *pari passu* with the decrease of native opium. Truly an admirable and a comprehensive programme. Let us see what steps have so far been taken to carry it out.

Much has undoubtedly been done. During the year 1907—the year following the issue of the first opium edict—thousands of opium dens have been closed, piles of opium-pipes have been burned amid much popular rejoicing and enthusiasm, princes and other high dignitaries who have failed to break off the habit within the prescribed time have been removed from office. The working of the regulations has been tested by practice and some necessary

modifications introduced. Men in high places have unfortunately died, owing to their being suddenly deprived of the drug, and "these sad results of virtue have caused the stringency of the regulations to be relaxed, and those past fifty instead of sixty years of age are now to be allowed to continue smoking."[1]

On the whole, more has, perhaps, been achieved than was to be expected. The other side of the picture, however, cannot be ignored. There is only too much evidence of the strength of the forces—some of which I have enumerated—which are acting, and must continue to act, as a drag upon the wheels of the Chinese chariot of reform. In the month of April (1907), for instance, "the consolidated Opium Tax Bureau, which is unquestionably an official institution, issued a proclamation urging the cultivation of the poppy for the sake of revenue,"[2]—a grave lapse from the high moral standard set by the emperor, Tao Kwang, who declared, in answer to the suggested advantages of legalising the opium traffic, that "Nothing would induce him to

[1] Parliamentary Paper, China, No. 1, 1908. [2] Ibid.

derive a revenue from the vice and misery of his people." In other districts subterfuge has been resorted to. Thus, in Wuhu we are told that all the dens were closed at the beginning of August in order that a report might be made to that effect, but by the beginning of September they were all open again.[1] In the town of Lofan, in Kwang-tung, it is stated that licences have been freely issued practically certifying that the entire smoking population is over sixty years of age, and therefore entitled, under the edict, to clemency.[2] Again, an eyewitness from Ho-nan states that, in order to comply with the terms of the edict, and at the same time to temper the wind of reform to the farmer, the area under cultivation has been reported at 25 to 30 per cent above the actual figure, so that the stipulated reduction of 10 per cent per annum will leave things as they are for some time to come.[3] Reports as to what is being done to enforce Article I. of the Imperial Regulations, the object of which is to secure

[1] Parliamentary Paper, China, No. 1, 1908.
[2] 'Times,' April 4th, 1908. [3] Ibid.

the "restriction of the cultivation of the poppy in order to remove the root of the evil," are not altogether reassuring. In Kan-su, we are told, "more poppy is grown than ever, and in one district an official urged the people to plant for all they were worth; . . . in consequence, five times as much was sown";[1] and in Mongolia more land is said to have been given over to poppy cultivation, while a general summary upon this aspect of the question reads as follows: "Although in isolated instances in other provinces [*i.e.*, apart from Ssŭch'uan] the cultivation of the poppy has been reduced, yet it may be safely said that in general no attention has been paid to this article throughout the empire, nor have the penalties for non-compliance with its provisions been imposed."[2]

If, then, Great Britain desires to assist China in the most practical manner, she must take care that nothing she does shall in any way encourage the poppy-growers, and others pecuniarily interested in poppy cultivation in China, in the idea that the abolition of the

[1] Parliamentary Paper, China, No. 1, 1908. [2] Ibid.

opium trade between India and China is to provide them with an opportunity of satisfying the demands of an increased home market. The British Government have adopted the policy best calculated to meet the case. They have undertaken to limit the quantity of opium exported from India to countries beyond the seas to 61,900 chests in 1908, 56,800 chests in 1909, and 51,700 chests in 1910. If at the conclusion of the three years they are satisfied that adequate measures have been taken to reduce the production of the drug in China in accordance with the provisions of the Imperial Edict, they agree to continue the reduction at the same rate until, at the end of ten years, the export from India will have been brought to an end. This does not, of course, satisfy the faddists who think that "such a *gradual morality scale* as this" is grievously humiliating to every right-minded man.[1] Practical reform, however, never has been, and never will be, brought about on lines advocated by the extremists, and the Government may rest assured that the common-sense

[1] 'National Righteousness,' January 1908.

of those intimately acquainted with the conditions in China is a more reliable guide, in matters of practical politics, than the soaring idealism which is generated in the editor's office of 'National Righteousness.' The Chinese emperor has declared his satisfaction at the action taken by the British Government in an edict issued on March 24th, 1908: "The British Government have now agreed to effect an annual reduction in the amount of opium exported to China. This enlightened policy on their part has greatly impressed us." And after a reference to the details of the agreement, the edict concludes: "To allow these three years to slip by without taking measures for the abolition of the drug would be a poor return for the benevolent policy of a friendly Power, and a deep disappointment to philanthropists of all nations."

There is another danger besides that of an increased production of opium in China itself, which has to be carefully guarded against *pari passu* with the reduction of the supply of the drug—the danger of abolishing one vice only to make room for a worse. It is well known

in the East that where opium-smoking is suppressed, the use of morphia or of some equally deleterious drug is almost certain to take its place, unless the most stringent precautions are adopted to prevent it. This danger appears to be imminent in China at the present moment. "Since the closing of the dens," says Dr Main of the Church Missionary Hospital at Hanchow, "anti-opium pills, containing morphia or opium in some form, have been freely distributed by the gentry, and shops for the sale of these anti-opium pills are opened everywhere and doing a roaring trade. . . . Some have been cured, but most of those who frequented the opium dens have simply replaced the pipe by morphia pills, and the last state is worse than the first."[1] Precautions were taken some time ago in the shape of a greatly enhanced duty upon morphia coming into China; but the smuggling of the drug appears to go on unchecked. Thus 'The Times' correspondent at Peking wired on June 25th of this year that

[1] Quoted by the Shanghai correspondent of 'The Times' in a letter to that paper of July 3rd, 1908.

"Chinese Customs statistics recently issued show that last year (1907) the morphia on which duty was paid to the Customs amounted to 96 oz. only, yet there is no reason to doubt that the amount imported was nearer 10 tons"; and he went on to say that orders for 1000 lb. weight have been given in a single transaction, the morphia being packed in 7 lb., 14 lb., 21 lb., and 28 lb. tins, four in a case. Again, in a telegram dated Peking, August 21st, 1908, the same informant declares that "a formidable difficulty is the immense importation of morphia and hypodermic appliances," and summarises an Imperial Edict, dated July 16th, decreeing that Chinese who manufacture morphia or hypodermic appliances, or shopkeepers who sell morphia without a Customs permit, shall be banished to "a pestilential frontier of the Empire." These things should at least give pause to the enthusiastic sentimentalist, and should warn him that sentiment without sense is a dangerous weapon, which may not unlikely inflict serious injury upon those on whose behalf it is ostensibly wielded.

So much for the "opium question" as it stands at the present time. It may be convenient if, in conclusion, I briefly sum up the position. The chief factors in the situation to be borne in mind are these. China produces ten times as much opium as she imports. She derives a revenue of between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000 from home-grown opium, and of £830,000 from the foreign importation. The value of the opium crop to its cultivators is considerably greater than that of an equal crop of cereals. A large proportion of the officials are not only opium-smokers themselves, but are pecuniarily interested in its production. From 30 to 40 per cent of the population are estimated by the Chinese Government to be addicted at the present day to a habit which first found its way into the country two hundred years ago. With a view to eradicating the vice, a succession of Imperial Edicts has been issued and a set of sweeping regulations has been drawn up, while the Government of Great Britain has agreed to limit the export of opium from India *pari passu* with the reduction of the

Chinese crop. The reader who has realised the magnitude of the task will naturally ask, What are the prospects of success? He is a rash man who ventures to dogmatise on matters concerning China. But the traveller in Western China who has passed through its miles of poppy-fields, who has studied the expression on the faces of its magistrates and weighed their words when discoursing upon the subject, will pay tribute to every word of Sir Edward Grey's considered expression of opinion when he said in the House of Commons on May 6th, 1908, that "to attempt to put an end to a national habit in ten years was an effort which any European Government would have been unwilling to face."

That there are enlightened men in China who are earnestly desirous of suppressing the evil, is in no way open to doubt. One of the leading merchants in Ch'ung-k'ing was actively denouncing the habit at the time of my visit; and it was reported that at Fu-chou, the centre of the opium cultivation in Ssŭch'uan, a landowner had given out that no more poppy-seed was to be sown on his land. A little later

Mr Joseph G. Alexander, who was travelling in Ssŭch'uan prior to attending the centenary conference of Protestant missions at Shanghai, found the local anti-opium committee at Ch'ung-k'ing militant and determined. "Would their officials," he asked them, "being so corrupt as they had been telling him, and interested in the traffic, carry out the Imperial decree?" A merchant stood up to answer for the rest. "Tell your people in England," he said, "that whether the officials want to carry out the decree or not, we shall make them do so." These are gratifying examples of a growing and salutary public opinion; but despite such welcome symptoms, to imagine that an insidious national vice can be outrooted from the character of a people by a mere stroke of the vermilion pencil, is to postulate for human nature a standard of virtue which everyday experience goes to show that it does not possess.

CHAPTER XIII.

YÜN-NAN FU TO TALI FU.

I PASSED out of the north gate of Yün-nan Fu on January 29th, and after travelling for an hour or two over the plain, crossed the encircling range of mountains by the Pichi Kuan or Jade Fowl pass, west of the city. The road then took us over undulating country, partially cultivaled, to An-ning Chou, where I spent the night, and on the next day through heath-like country of a hilly nature to Lao-ya-kuan.

I suppose the road, which, be it remembered, is the main line of communication across the province from the capital to the frontier of the empire, is the most execrable example of a highway which it is possible for the mind of man, with its necessary limitations, to con-

ceive. As a hindrance to traffic it can indeed lay claim to considerable distinction, but this, outside China, would scarcely be voted a desirable recommendation for a road, and as a highway *qua* highway, it can only be described as a dismal and sorrowful failure. I invariably left it when possible, and took a line across the adjoining hills and fields, —a procedure which I noticed was frequently adopted by the caravans of the country themselves. The muleteer is, indeed, as an individual, by no means devoid of humour. "Good for ten years, and bad for ten thousand," he says, as he stoically contemplates the highway which a thoughtful and paternal Government provides for him. That he happens to live during the period of ten thousand years, and not during the happier epoch of ten years, is neither his own fault nor the fault of his Government, but the accident of fate, and a thing, therefore, to be borne,—cheerfully it may be, but in any case to be borne. That is destiny, and no good Easterner is so foolish as to dream of questioning the decrees of destiny.

A main road in Yün-nan.

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The strip of land, of crude and wholly unconsidered gradients, which was apportioned for the purposes of communication in this particular district, had the appearance of having been powdered with shapeless boulders from some gigantic sugar-sifter. Large portions of it were under water, and the whole of it under slippery mud—this, too, at the driest season of the year. A glance at the accompanying photograph will perhaps assist the reader to an understanding of the real significance of the expression "Chinese road." I had heard "young China" declaring from the housetops its ability and its determination to cover the country with a network of railways, and now I was travelling over young China's conception of a main road, and I was amused—but not surprised. I had a short time before come into contact with a college of the modern type, where the mathematical course began with algebra, regardless of the fact that, as far as the pupils were concerned, simple arithmetic was a thing unknown. Why should a Chinese who aspired to solve abstruse mathematical

problems concern himself with such mathematical puerilities as the silly rule which says that 2+2 are to make 4? Why, likewise, should a Yün-nan student who aspires to construct mountain railways of a highly complicated kind bother his head about such elements of road-making as levels, gradients, and curves? Why indeed—so long as it is only Celestials who are constrained to travel over them, and the goods of Sinim that they are fated to convey?

Eighty *li* of the switchback order took us to Lu-fêng Hsien on the evening of the 31st. The mountain-sides all round showed signs of former forest. Whole areas of pine-trees, however, have been ruthlessly cut down, and nothing but the stumps remain. These sprout and assume the appearance of small bushes, adding a somewhat curious feature to the landscape. That some improvement has taken place in the condition of the country since the close of the devastating Mohammedan rebellion in 1873 is attested by the presence of well-cultivated basins, which are to be seen from the road among the hills. My

only note as to the condition of the road itself between Lao-ya Kuan and Lu-fêng Hsien is—"track abominable." Margary, in his diary of his famous journey from Shanghai to Burma, describes it as outdoing everything he had so far encountered in utter badness. "It is far from being an easy task," he wrote, "to describe the incredible obstacles which are suffered to remain unheeded on this track." Perhaps there was truth in his surmise that the retreating Mohammedans "purposely destroyed the pavement in order to throw difficulties in the way of the Imperial troops." This, however, was thirty-five years ago, and the obstacles are still there.

Shê-tz'ŭ, a village situated in a well-cultivated plain surrounded by hills, was our halting-place for the night of February 1st. We had travelled as usual across mountain-ranges all day, the only habitations visible consisting of small collections of mud houses that could hardly be dignified by the name of village. We halted at Kuang-t'ung Hsien on the 2nd, and at Ch'u-hsiung Fu on the 3rd. The latter is a small town with a

small garrison and a few moderate shops, in which I was unable to find anything of foreign manufacture. The military officer, a man of inferior rank, called to pay his respects, and provided me with a fresh escort of four soldiers, those who had accompanied me from the capital returning to their homes the happy possessors of 1200 *cash* (about 3s.) apiece.

For the next two days we passed through a less impossible country. Well-cultivated valleys, with fields of rape, wheat, and poppy, were intersected by pine-clad ridges of no very great height, our stages being the villages of Lü-ho and Sha-chiao on the nights of the 4th and 5th respectively. During the 6th and 7th we were again marching over interminable mountains, spending the night of the 6th at the poverty-stricken village of Pu P'eng, and dropping on the afternoon of the 7th to a large level plain over 7000 feet above sea-level, well cultivated and dotted with villages, at one of which, Yün-nan-yi, we spent the night.

Immediately after leaving Yün-nan-yi on the

8th, we passed through some low hills and emerged on another large plain in which stands the town of Yün-nan Hsien. Leaving the town a mile or two to the north, we climbed a mountain-range, where our path lay among masses of wild rose in bloom, and descended on the far side to the northern end of the Mitu plain, halting at the village of Hūnghai. To the south the plain stretched away to the horizon, and it is up this tract of level land that the Yün-nan Company's Commission decided on bringing their line from the Kung-long Ferry, carrying it over the range a little south of where we crossed it, to Yün-nan Hsien, and so on to the capital, following the direction of the road along which we had travelled, but turning instead of crossing the ranges, which cut the existing route at right angles. A branch, it was proposed, should follow the caravan route from Hūnghai to Tali Fu, and possibly on past that city to Shang-kuan, the northern pass out of the valley in which Tali Fu is situated. Between Tali Fu and Yün-nan Fu the line would pass along what may be described as

the backbone of Yün-nan, a strip of elevated country draining to the Yang-tsze on the north and to the Red river basin on the south.

Of the three lines talked of, but not yet begun—*i.e.*, the Bhamo-Tali Fu line, the Tali Fu-Yün-nan Fu line, and the Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan railway—the Tali Fu-Yün-nan Fu line would undoubtedly prove the easiest to construct, and would, under existing conditions, tap an area rather less populous and productive, perhaps, than the Bhamo-Tali Fu line, but undoubtedly more populous and productive than the Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan line. The scientific and systematic development of the mineral wealth of the country might very considerably modify existing conditions and enhance the value of the Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan line, copper, lead, zinc, iron, and coal existing in considerable quantities in the vicinity of Tung-ch'uan. Mining enterprise in this part of China, however, is pushed forward with an extreme caution and deliberation; and it was only while I myself was in Yün-

nan Fu in January 1907, that an Englishman and a Frenchman were said to be on their way with a view to making some personal investigation into the possibilities of a concession to work minerals in seven named districts granted to an Anglo-French combination, designated the Yün-nan Syndicate, in June 1902. Even in the matter of minerals it is neither the Bhamo-Tali Fu, nor the Tali Fu-Yün-nan Fu, nor the Yün-nan-Ssŭch'uan lines that possess the brightest prospects, but the French Red river line from the Yün-nanese capital to the sea, since it is in the neighbourhood of this line that lie the rich mines of Kuo-chiu-ch'ang, the greatest tin-producing district in China.

It may be added that the visit of the engineers in question, on behalf of the Yün-nan Syndicate, has already produced a sequel from which it can only be deduced that, as a result of the "China for the Chinese" propaganda, the scientific development of the mineral resources of Yün-nan are to be still further postponed. The episode is described

by a correspondent of 'The Times' in an article upon "Foreign Capital in China" in that paper's "Financial and Commercial Supplement" of July 24th, 1908. I append the following extract:—

"In 1906 it was decided to make a beginning of independent working, and the company's engineer was therefore directed to inspect certain properties in the Lin-an Fu district; the necessary intimation was conveyed to the local officials, and a military escort was provided by the Sub-Prefect of Mêng-tzŭ. In the course of his work the engineer had occasion to inspect the private property of a native named Ming Li-sung, but no sooner had the inspection taken place, and before the return of the engineer to Mêng-tzŭ, than Ming Li-sung (aged 70) and his son were arrested and imprisoned on the charge of having attempted to sell their land to foreigners. A proclamation was issued in reference to the case on December 31, 1907, by Wei, Taotai of Mêng-tzŭ. This document is interesting in that it commences by referring to the Yün-nan Company's agreement as an entirely satisfactory one; subsequently, however, the writer refers to the recently promulgated Mining Regulations, gravely asserting that thereunder a permit from the local yamen is necessary for all prospecting operations. Finally, he accuses

Ming Li-sung (before trial) of having tried to sell his land secretly, and insists on the Government's rights of ownership in the subsoil and the necessity for official sanction for all mining work.

"Ming Li-sung was subsequently tried, and the magistrate's decision given that he had only been associated with the foreigner in prospecting operations and had not attempted to sell his land. Nevertheless, his property was taken from him, and ordered to be included henceforward in the joint-stock lands of the Ming clan, on the condition that the latter should 'never arrange to sell or lease it to foreigners.' In the conclusion of the judgment it is recorded that 'Ming Li-sung and his son acted unlawfully in introducing a foreigner to investigate and measure this mining property.' Intimations of this kind from the local yamen are not lost upon the people, and the result in this case is equivalent to complete repudiation of the rights conferred upon the Yün-nan Syndicate—repudiation deliberate and unjustified by any real or imaginary grievance. And, as showing that the central and provincial Governments are at one in this suicidal policy, it should be added that the French Legation's formal protest to the Waiwu-pu against the action of Wei Taotai was met by his removal upon substantial promotion.

"An idea of the favourable nature of the agreement which is thus nullified may be inferred from the

fact that, in addition to binding itself to supply a million pounds of copper annually to the central Government at a fixed low rate, and to meet the requirements of the provinces at local market rates, the company undertook to pay 35 per cent of its net profits on paying properties in royalties (making good all losses on other mines from its own funds), and to pay a pit-mouth tax of 5 per cent on all produce."

The Mining Regulations referred to by Taotai Wei were those issued by the Chinese Government in 1907, and were of such a character as to practically prohibit the employment of modern methods and of foreign capital in the development of the mineral wealth of China. They were denounced by the Legations as a breach of treaty engagements; but the case of the Yün-nan Syndicate is only one of many that might be cited as examples of the avidity with which provincial officials have grasped hold of any cover, behind which they might shelter their arbitrary and exclusive procedure where foreigners are concerned.

During the night the usual hubbub of a Chinese inn was accentuated by the late arrival

of a caravan of twenty mules, bound from Tali Fu with a consignment of opium for the capital.

North-west of Hūnghai the road ascends a range of mountains, and passing through a gap at no very great altitude, drops by a gradual descent to another plain, in which stands the town of Ch'ao-chou. A heavy crop of beans stood in the valley, and poppy was also growing in large quantities. From here a walk of thirty *li* over level ground brought us on the morning of February 10th to Hsia-kuan, a distributing centre of considerable importance occupying a fine strategic position at the mouth of the rich valley of Tali Fu. Few retail shops are to be seen, but large warehouses and offices tell of its commercial importance. The Hsia-kuan river, which drains the vast lake running south and north along the Tali valley, flows languidly through the town prior to entering a gorge a mile or so to the west, down which it rushes with all the force and fury of a mountain torrent. Crossing it by a fine stone bridge, we ascended the long, steep, stone-paved street which leads

through the town to the slopes which lie between a wall of snow-capped mountains rising in peaks to 13,000 feet on the west, and the deep blue waters of the lake on the east, and eight miles farther on passed through the imposing southern gateway of Tali Fu, the western capital.

CHAPTER XIV.

TALI FU.

TALI FU has passed through stirring times. It became the stronghold of the Mohammedan faction during the great rebellion which scourged the province from 1855 to 1873. The last town to hold out against the Imperial forces, it succumbed finally to treachery, being betrayed by the chief Minister of the Mohammedan commander within its gates.

The so-called "Panthay" rebellion began in a riot at a copper mine, and ended in the devastation of a province. The hand of God, indeed, lay heavy upon this corner of the dominions of the "Son of Heaven," for as though seventeen years of relentless civil

warfare were not enough, plague and pestilence lit upon the scene, and added remorselessly to the havoc already wrought by the hand of man.

The story of the Mohammedan rising is briefly this. The mandarins in charge of the work at the mines, absorbed after the manner of their kind in the fascinating pastime of lining their own pockets, took no thought for the men slaving under them, but rather assumed the attitude of Pharaoh towards the Israelites when he said unto them, "Ye are idle, ye are idle; go ye, get you straw where ye can find it; yet not ought of your work shall be diminished." The Chinese are the most easily governed people in the world, yet there comes a time when even a Chinaman rebels, and, goaded beyond endurance under the rod of the taskmaster, they rose. The miners were chiefly Mohammedans, or Hui-hui as they were termed in the country itself, and they were soon joined by their co-religionists throughout the province, already exasperated by the partiality of the magistrates, who had been displaying their zeal for

The southern gateway, Tali Fu.

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orthodoxy by deciding a series of quarrels between the pork-sellers and the Mohammedan butchers in favour of the former. This was in 1855.

So quickly did the flame of rebellion spread that the capital was soon threatened, and the Viceroy in alarm patched up a temporary peace. Peace, however, was not to be of long duration. Changsun, the Governor of Ho Ch'ing, in co-operation with the mandarin of Li-chiang and another Chinese official, following the usual Chinese precedent, organised a general massacre of the Mohammedans for a fixed day. The plan may be said to have met with only partial success, for while several hundreds were satisfactorily disposed of, the Mohammedan population as a whole, instead of being cowed into submission, now stood by for war. The Imperial forces were defeated at Tali in 1857, while the Mohammedans at Hailung in the south, after holding on till provisions gave out, cut their way through to their comrades at Kuang-si, which became thenceforward a centre of revolution. The Imperialists soon learned that they had

a formidable organisation to deal with. Ma Te Sing, a learned man who had visited Mecca and Constantinople, became Dictator with full powers, and two generals, Ma Hsiu and To Wen Hsiu, took command of the southern and western troops respectively. The successes which they met with aroused no small measure of alarm in the breasts of those entrusted with the governance of the province, and when, in November 1860, the capital fell before the victorious soldiers of Ma Hsiu, it was realised that something definite must be done. The favourite method —ruthless repression by means of massacre and torture—had failed; there was only one alternative conceivable to the Chinese mind—purchase. Ma Hsiu, the captor of Yün-nan Fu, and Ma Te Sing, the Mohammedan Dictator, were approached, and a satisfactory bargain was struck, the former being granted the rank of Chen-t'ai (general of brigade) in the Imperial army, and the latter a pension of 200 *taels* a-month. With the conclusion of this deal, reports of great victories to the Imperial army were despatched to Peking,

and all concerned congratulated themselves on having honourably extricated themselves from an extremely unpleasant situation.

The insurrection, however, was far from being quelled, and fierce risings continued to take place—Ma Hsiu, who now took the name of Ma Ju Lung, becoming the champion of the Imperial forces.

A diversion was also caused about this time among the Imperial forces themselves by Ma Te Sing, who considered the time favourable to the prosecution of his personal ambitions, upsetting the Government and proclaiming himself Viceroy. He was speedily deposed, and order again restored within the ranks of the Imperialist party by his old colleague, Ma Ju Lung; but these happenings were little calculated to bring the real rebellion to a conclusion. With dissension in the ranks of his opponents, success continued to attend the armies of To Wen Hsiu, who now directed the affairs of the Mohammedan faction—so much so that the members of the British mission under Major Sladen, who had penetrated to Momein (T'eng Yüeh)

early in 1868, were induced to believe that an independent Mohammedan kingdom was in all truth about to be set up, including in its embrace Yün-nan, and even parts of Ssŭch'uan. "It seemed," wrote Dr Anderson, the chronicler of the mission, "at this period almost certain that Yün-nan would become an independent kingdom, if indeed Ssŭch'uan and the northern provinces were not also formed into a great Mohammedan empire."

We now know that the power of the Mohammedans was more apparent than real, for we have seen how it crumbled and gave way when once a determined attack was made upon it. There is little doubt that the visit of the British mission and its friendly intercourse with the Mohammedan leaders was the spur required to rouse the energy of the somnolent Chinese authorities. The prospect of assistance being given by Great Britain to the insurgents "so alarmed the Chinese Government as to lead them to make a supreme effort to stamp out the rebellion. Certain it is that such effort was successfully made; and it dates from the arrival of Major

Sladen's party at Momein and the subsequent despatch of the Sultan's son, Hassan, to Europe on a mission to the British Government seeking help."[1]

The turn of the tide came, bringing with it the sword of the avenger. Treachery, atrocity, and outrage accompanied the forces commissioned to restore law and order: vast numbers of Mussulmans, who surrendered on promise of their lives, were ruthlessly slaughtered. The innate brutality of the yellow race was stirred to its muddiest depths, passion in its most hideous guise held high carnival. In 1872 Hsia-kuan, the key to the Tali plain, was betrayed by its commander, Tung Fei Lung. Kuang-si was next taken by treachery, and the two chiefs, Ta T'ou Wu and Ma Min Kuang, who agreed to capitulate, were treacherously seized and bound, rolled on a floor carefully prepared with nails an inch long, and beheaded, their heads being sent to Lin-an to be exposed. In the following year Tali Fu was betrayed by To Wen Hsiu's chief Minister. To Wen Hsiu himself, when taken

[1] Sir Rutherford Alcock, K.C.B.

into the presence of the Imperialist commander, gave vent to what proved to be a dying prayer—"I have nothing to ask but this: spare the people." He had previously taken the precaution of swallowing poison, from which he shortly afterwards expired. The Chinese authorities had no idea of being deterred from such an opportunity of setting an example by any dying supplication, even if it was, as Baber points out, "the most impressive and pathetic ever uttered by a dying patriot," and they proceeded to ensure the example being a thorough one. The chief officials of the city were invited to a banquet, and were assassinated one by one as they passed into the banqueting hall. For the rest, the district was given over to three days massacre, during which thousands are said to have perished. "The streets ran ankle-deep in blood," says Dr Morrison; "of 50,000 inhabitants, 30,000 were butchered. After the massacre twenty-four panniers of human ears were sent to Yün-nan city to convince the people of the capital that they had nothing more to fear from the rebellion."

On the other hand, when Baber visited Tali in 1877, only four years after the fall of the city, he was told by the captain of his escort, who claimed to have been a participator in the events, that "he did not think there could have been more than 500 corpses, or the water would have stunk more."[1] Thus ended the rebellion which had scourged the province for a period of seventeen years, dislocated its industries and commerce, and reduced its population from 16,000,000 to 6,000,000.

The town, like the whole country, still bears traces of these days of strife. The south gateway is imposing, and the main street which runs from it the whole length of the town to the north gate is one continuous jostle —pigs, poultry, dogs, and people vieing with one another to block the way; but for the rest, large spaces within the city walls are unbuilt on, and wear a depressing and poverty-stricken aspect. My arrival coincided with that of the New Year, and not only was I constrained to halt for three days in order that my coolies

[1] Notes on the route of Mr Grosvenor's Mission.

might take their fill of pork in celebration of the festive season, but also to dispense handfuls of *cash* all round to better enable them to do so. New Year's eve, February 12th, was rendered odious to myself by reason of the incessant beating of gongs and the letting off of countless thousands of crackers, which lasted far into the night, and indeed into the dawn of the New Year—a form of amusement which appears to give inordinate pleasure to the Chinese. This carouse had an extraordinary effect upon the town the following day: every one was sleeping, every door was closed, and the street, which at all other times hummed with the clatter of many hundreds of wagging tongues, and was so inconveniently crowded with seething humanity as to cease to merit the name of thoroughfare at all, had assumed all of a sudden the appearance of a city of the dead.

A variety of tribes inhabit the country in the vicinity of, and to the north of, Tali Fu, and the commercial event of chief importance as far as the town is concerned—namely, the *Yueh-kai*, an annual fair held during the third

moon — brings together a motley crowd, an epitome of the border peoples of these regions as far as the highlands of Tibet. According to official proclamation, "myriads of merchants from the four quarters of the globe collect together dense as the clouds"; but the author of this document has made use of poetic licence to an unwarrantable degree, 5000 being about the number who now attend the fair.

Tali itself does not appear to have much trade. I found one or two shops stocking foreign goods, and was told on inquiry that some cotton goods bearing the name of Steel & Co. came *viâ* Mêng-tzŭ. Nevertheless, there is little doubt but that western Yün-nan, with Tali as its centre, is on the whole considerably more populous than the part of Yün-nan served by the Red river route. This was the opinion of Consul Litton, whose personal acquaintance with the province was perhaps unique, and he mentions the Ho Ch'ing valley as an example of possibilities of the western half of the province. "The Ho Ch'ing valley," he says, "may be recommended to the attention of those who would have us believe that Yün-nan is a

poverty-stricken wilderness. The plain is 24 miles by 5, and contains about 200 villages, excellently built. The city itself has about 12,000 inhabitants. . . . The streets are densely crowded every ten days for market."[1] It must be remembered that the buying capacity of the people depends upon the success or failure of the opium and rice crops. The export of opium across the Sino-Burmese frontier is disallowed by treaty, hence the tendency to import foreign goods from other directions—*i.e.*, the direction in which they sell their opium. Other possible exports suggested by Litton are ponies, mules, musk, hemp, straw-braid, rhubarb, drugs consumed by the Chinese, wool and furs from Li-chiang, bristles, and silk from north-west Ssŭch'uan. I am inclined to doubt the value of the mules and ponies of this part of China as an article of export, and if the campaign against opium cultivation is to bear fruit, I see very little prospect of Yün-nan providing an expanding market for foreign goods for many years to come.

[1] Report on a Journey in North-West Yün-nan.

CHAPTER XV.

TALI FU TO T'ENG YÜEH.

It is a weary struggle of twelve days from Tali Fu to T'eng Yüeh. The magnificence of the scenery does not always compensate the traveller for the fact that immense ranges of mountains, separated by correspondingly deep valleys, have to be crossed with monotonous regularity in the course of each successive day's march. From Hsia-kuan the track follows a stream draining from the south-west corner of the Tali lake to the little village of Yang-pi on the river of the same name, dropping 1500 feet in doing so. A fine suspension-bridge stretches across the river, and on the far side the path zigzags up the wall of mountains which hems in the valley of the

Yang-pi on the west. The range is well wooded, and from the summit a magnificent view is obtained of the Yang-pi valley and the snow-clad line of mountains which fills in the view to the north-east. Descending slightly, and then running along a spur at right angles to the range just crossed at a considerable height above a valley running east and west, the track provided a charming walk, shaded by a multitude of forest trees, conspicuous among which were magnificent rhododendron-trees ablaze with crimson flower. A tiny mountain hamlet, T'ai-p'ing-p'u, provides a halting-place for the night on the evening of the third day out from Tali Fu.

"Sir," said Joe the following morning, looking in as I finished breakfast, "can I speak to you?" "Certainly," I replied. "I hear a very funny story here, sir," he began. "Well, let's have it," I said. "They say, sir," he continued hesitatingly, and staring at my now empty plate, "that anybody who eats T'ai-p'ing-p'u eggs must surely be taken ill with great pain!" "Good gracious, Joe," I gasped, "do you realise that I have just eaten

The road a little west of Hsia-kuan.

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no less than three T'ai-p'ing-p'u eggs, and you come and tell me that I must be taken ill with great pain?" "Sir, this story a very funny story—I don't think it can be true story." It fortunately proved to be false as far as I was concerned, but I spent a day in gloomy anticipation of what each succeeding moment might bring forth.

We dropped hurriedly to the valley of the Shun-pi after leaving T'ai-p'ing-p'u, and crossing that river by a good suspension-bridge, followed along its right bank to its junction with the Shuang-cha Ho. A short distance up the left bank of this river brought us to the village of Huang-lien-pu. The usual formidable range faced us on the far side, and from 7.30 A.M. the day following until 10 A.M. I climbed doggedly and without a halt. From the summit we travelled on for some miles at a considerable altitude, through lovely wooded scenery, till towards evening, when we descended abruptly down barer hills covered with withered grass, which must flourish luxuriantly in the wet season. Below us, running at right angles to our course, lay the valley of the Yung-ping, a

broad, flat-bottomed expanse densely cultivated —the first cultivation of any consequence met with since leaving Tali. Crossing the Yung-ping—evidently at some seasons of the year a broad expanse of water, but now reduced to two or three shallow streams flowing along the depressions of what looked like a broad river-bed—we reached the small town of Chu-tung. This valley is undoubtedly well populated, a number of small towns, or rather large villages, being visible along its length. During the evening I had a visitor in the shape of a Chinese student, a bearer of the second classical degree. He evidently hankered after better things, in the shape of more practical knowledge, and asked me to write down in English a statement of his desires, that he might present it, if opportunity offered, on reaching Burma, to which country he intended making his way.

Towards the end of a long march on February 19th I observed below me, at the foot of some steep hills, white "Cabul" tents and Indian camp-followers. This proved to be the encampment of Mr Lilley, an engineer

despatched by the Government of India to examine the country with a view to determining the practicability or otherwise of railway construction in this part of China. The results of the survey completed by Mr Lilley and his party during the early summer of 1907 are likely to have a modifying effect upon prevalent ideas, founded upon the witty criticisms of Colborne Baber, with regard to trade routes in this quarter. The whole question of railways in Western China is dealt with in a later chapter, but it may not be amiss to explain here the origin of existing prejudice against the T'eng Yüeh-Tali Fu line as a possible route for a railway from Burma.

It is based chiefly upon certain remarks of Colborne Baber, who travelled over this route as a member of the Grosvenor Mission in 1877. The science of mountain railway construction was less advanced thirty years ago than it is now, and it is perhaps because it has not been generally recognised how great have been the strides which have been made, during recent years, in this particular branch of the engineering profession, that the conclusions arrived at

then by one who was, after all, possessed of no expert engineering knowledge, have been generally accepted as conclusive ever since. His declaration in a Government paper, China, No. 3, 1878, that "We feel at liberty to say that if British trade ever adopts this track, we shall be delighted and astounded in about equal proportions," has been quoted *ad nauseam*, and is generally held to have settled for all time the pretensions of the Tali Fu-T'eng Yüeh route as an avenue of ingress for British trade. The quotation given above is supported by others in the same paper. "The trade route from Yün-nan Fu to T'eng Yüeh is the worst possible route with the least conceivable trade," he declares; and further on, "I do not mean that it would be absolutely impossible to construct a railway. . . . By piercing half a dozen Mont Cenis tunnels and erecting a few Menai bridges, the road from Burma to Yün-nan Fu could, doubtless, be much improved."

Twenty years later engineers in the employ of the Yün-nan Company, accepting the conclusions above quoted, were in search of a railway

route to the south, the Kung-long Ferry, on the Burmese frontier, being selected as the starting-point. Major Davies, whose splendid geographical work in Yün-nan cannot be too highly spoken of, finds in Baber's utterances support for the Kung-long Ferry scheme. Referring to the extracts above quoted, he declared at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society that he quite agreed with the truth of these remarks of Baber. "The only thing is," he went on to say, "they do not apply to the railway at all; they refer to the road which goes westward from T'eng Yüeh to Tali Fu, whereas the present proposed railway comes into Yün-nan from quite a different direction. Indeed, only half a page lower down Baber himself recommends as a probable line for a railway the very route which has now been adopted."[1] The recommendation by Baber here referred to is that "the object should be to attain some town of importance south of Yung-ch'ang and Tali Fu, such as Shun-ning, from which both these

[1] 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' Feb. 1903, p. 120.

cities could be reached by ascending the valleys, instead of crossing all the mountain-ranges as must be done if the T'eng Yüeh route is selected."[1] Similar views were expressed by Sir George Scott, speaking at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in 1905. "The whole question of a railway from Burma has been prejudiced by Colborne Baber, who said that a railway there would have to be a series of bridges and tunnels. Well, if you start from Bhamo, . . . you would have to build these bridges and tunnels. But . . . there is a way round. Nature has provided us with a geological fault; . . . in one place, directly in a line with Mandalay, there is a curious fault—the line of rocks run due east and west, and up this from Mandalay a railway has been built. . . . The railway, so far, stops at Lashio, and if it goes no farther it will never pay; but if we carry it along this geological fault to China or into China, it will be a success. The fault leads us not only to the Salwin river, but it gives us a route up the

[1] 'Supplementary Papers of the Royal Geographical Society,' vol. i. p. 185.

Nam Ting river to the Mekong river watershed."[1] Even more emphatic is another

[1] 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' June 1905, p. 618. For the benefit of those who are closely interested in the controversy over the Kung-long Ferry route, I may add that Sir George Scott disagreed with Major Davies as to the exact route to be followed. "The proper route," he declared, "would be to cross southwards from the Nam Ting to the Nam Hsung, down which the Mekong could easily be approached. . . . If once the railway could be got across the Mekong to Ching-tung, then there is no difficulty whatever in going north towards Tali Fu, or better still, to a point half-way between Tali and Yün-nan Fu, whence there is an easy approach to the Yang-tsze." To this view Major Davies objected. "The line which he proposes," he wrote in the 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society' for August 1905, is to cross southwards from the Nam Ting to the Nam Hsung. I can only suppose that he means to follow the Nam Ting up to about latitude 23° 45′ or higher, and then bend round southward, passing perhaps near Keng-ma and reaching the Nam Hsung at Möng-Hsung. The range which divides the Nam Ting from the Nam Hsung has nowhere been found as low as 7000 feet. As the Nam Ting valley is here not much over 2000 feet, the difficulties of getting the railway from one valley to the other are likely to be considerable." And further on, "Even if a railway could be got to Ching-tung Ting, the difficulties are by no means over. There is a pass of 6800 feet between the valley of the Black river (in which Ching-tung Ting is situated) and that of the Red river, in which lies Meng-hua Ting, and another pass of 8800 feet between the Meng-hua Ting plain and the Tali Fu plain. Another line from Ching-tung Ting that Sir George Scott suggests is to a point half-way between Tali Fu and Yün-nan Fu. By this he

authority, Captain Ryder: "When we come, however, to consider the question of a line from the Kung-long Ferry up the Nam Ting valley, we once more enter the regions of possibility. . . . And this line, which Captain Watt Jones

probably means Yün-nan Hsien. But this place is not in the valley of the Black river, but in that of the Red river, so that yet another high range of hills has to be crossed to reach it." From this point Major Davies admits that a practicable line for a railway could be found to the Yang-tsze at Chin-chiang-kai; but this he points out is 500 miles from Sui Fu, at which point navigation practically ceases. "These 500 miles of extremely difficult construction through an absolutely unprofitable country would render such a line quite impracticable." The line from Kung-long to Yün-nan Hsien, followed by Captain Watt Jones under Major Davies's directions, is described briefly by Major Davies as follows: "It would follow up the Nam Ting from Kung-long, continuing northwards over a range 5600 feet to Yun Chou. From here down the Nan Chiao Ho to the Mekong, up this river for thirty miles, and then by an easy ascent up a small side stream past Kung Lang, and over another watershed 7200 feet to the Red river valley. Both the Black river and the Wei-yuan Chiang are avoided altogether by going round their sources." When the Government of India were called upon to consider the Kung-long Ferry route, they formed the opinion that the best-known route from the Kung-long Ferry onwards was not only an extremely difficult one, but one which passed through a sparsely populated and unproductive part of the country, and they decided that little was to be gained by sinking vast sums of money in so unprofitable and unnecessary an enterprise.

followed through up to Tali Fu and so on to Yün-nan Fu, is the only through line into China from Burma that can ever be constructed."[1]

Here we have a fair representation of prevalent opinion upon the question of a railway route from Burma into Yün-nan. Summed up, it amounts to this. The possibility of a railway ever being constructed along the Bhamo-Tali Fu route was ridiculed by a Consular officer thirty years ago. The conclusions then arrived at were accepted as valid by engineers examining the country with a special view to discovering possible railway routes in the years 1898-1900, and a line from the Kung-long Ferry on the Burmese frontier *viâ* the Nam Ting river to Tali Fu and Yün-nan Fu was declared by them to be "the only through line into China from Burma that can ever be constructed." The importance, therefore, of the conclusions arrived at by Mr Lilley is considerable, since they invalidate all the premisses upon which the question of railway construc-

[1] 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' Feb. 1903, p. 112.

tion in western Yün-nan has been based. For they have definitely ascertained that there is no insuperable obstacle to the construction of a metre-gauge railway from Bhamo to Tali Fu.

On February 20th I climbed a range of mountains to gaze down from their summit upon the waters of a great river, flowing deep[1] and silent between towering walls of rock, and spanned by a bridge which hung like a cord between perpendicular cliffs on either side. Here at last was the famous Mekong, at once the delight and the despair of Francis Garnier, —the magnet which has irresistibly drawn to its rugged course the flower of the explorers of France, a vast volume of water speeding eternally from the frozen highlands of Tibet, and travelling for 2800 miles through the tumbled mountain labyrinths of Yün-nan, on through the Shan States and Laos, adding to its volume at each stride forward in its course, to find the ocean at last through the mazes of its delta on the southern shores of Cochin China.

The pathetic persistence with which a whole

[1] The depth here at low water proved to be 48 feet.

Bridge over the Mekong.

series of French explorers fought to establish the practicability of the Mekong as an artery of communication from their sea-board to the heart of China, provides a chapter of engrossing interest in the story of the exploration of Asia. With indefatigable zeal steam launches were forced up 1600 miles of hostile river; but the enterprise proved of no practical value. "Even below Luang Prabang the navigation of the river is fraught with immense difficulty; above that point it is excessively dangerous; and therefore it may safely be averred that there is little probability of the trade of the Hinterland of Indo-China being diverted from its ancient channels by means of a steam flotilla plying upon the waters of the Mekong."[1]

That part of the Mekong which stood athwart my course must be considered, as M. Vivien St Martin points out, "not as a trade route, but as a barrier to commerce, since each crossing of the river necessitates a descent and an ascent of from 3300 feet to 4400 feet each." Having negotiated the descent and the ascent, I sought shelter and

[1] Hugh Clifford in 'Further India.'

repose at the village of Shui Chai, built on the edge of a small cultivated basin high up on the range west of the river. The shelter was of the usual kind, and my repose was rudely interrupted by the village mummers, who continued to salute the New Year with jarring noises on drums and gongs. On the following day we dropped into a large, level, well-cultivated, and apparently prosperous plain, in which is situated the town of Yung Chang, the largest town between Tali Fu and T'eng Yüeh. It has an evil reputation for rowdyism, though I did not experience any discourtesy at the hands of its people myself. In the principal inns I found merchants importing cotton yarn from Burma, and by no means adverse to seeing a railway built from Bhamo.

From Yung Chang one travels in four days to T'eng Yüeh. The journey is a trying one by reason of the high ranges dividing the Salwin and Shweli, which have to be crossed. At the village of Pupiao, where I halted for the first night out from Yung Chang, I encountered a white man, engaged

upon the task of walking round the world for a wager. The amount involved, he informed me in confidence, approximated £32,000, in addition to 1,000,000 francs offered by some Continental walking club; but as he had four years in which to complete his circum-perambulation of the globe, and had so far only been going for four months, I agreed with him that much might happen before he found himself the proud possessor of the wagered money. He incidentally dropped a remark which led me to understand that the terms of his wager prevented him from asking for financial assistance while on his tour, though he had been offered quite voluntary contributions from time to time. He seemed quite surprised when I asked to be allowed to offer a small but quite voluntary contribution to his modest reserve fund. Before we parted I learned that a provincial newspaper in the north of England had been fortunate enough to secure his services as a correspondent, and I was favoured with the contents of an article destined to instruct the "people at home." It described a performance in Western China

by village mummers in celebration of the New Year, and commented upon the appearance of the village lasses who took part. In the interests of the "people at home," for whose instruction this article was composed, I felt impelled to point out that in China women never took part in such performances, and that the individuals whom he had mistaken for the village lasses were, in point of fact, the village lads. He thought the point was a small one, but would be glad to make the alteration.

My sojourn at Pupiao is further stamped on my mind because of a wild and yelling mob who broke into the inn courtyard in the dead of night. I was roused from slumber by shouts and a great hammering upon the courtyard gates. The gates gave way with a crash at the moment that I scrambled out of bed and grasped my revolver. It fortunately proved to be, not an anti-foreign riot as I feared, but merely a gambling dispute between my coolies and the villagers, and after two or three men on either side had been severely mauled, the worst offenders were successfully

ejected and comparative quiet descended upon the inn once more.

From Pupiao we crossed a mountain-range and then descended into the valley of the Salwin. Terraces of paddy-fields covered the lower slopes of the valley, which is wider than that of the Mekong; vegetation assumed a semi-tropical character, and the atmosphere became heavy and oppressive. There are probably good grounds for the bad name which the valley has among the natives for its unhealthy climate. The country in the vicinity was described by Marco Polo as being "full of great woods and mountains which 'tis impossible to pass, the air in summer is so impure and bad; and any foreigners attempting it would die for certain." This must be read in the light of his explanatory remarks in the prologue of his historic work,—"and we shall set down things seen as seen, *and things heard as heard only*, so that no jot of falsehood may mar the truth of our Book, and that all who shall read it or hear it read may put full faith in the truth of all its contents." The atmosphere is, no doubt, vitiated with

malaria at certain seasons of the year, but it is doubtful whether even in this respect the valleys of western Yün-nan are as unhealthy as the valley of the Red river in the south.

The accommodation from the Salwin on to T'eng Yüeh—a two days' journey—is abominable, even judged by the standards of Yün-nan. The night is spent at a hovel a short distance up the mountain-range which rises on the west of the Shweli river, called Kan-lan-chan, which holds out no sufficient attraction even to a Yün-nan coolie to encourage him to hasten his jaded steps towards the end of a tiring march. Even the members of my escort, who had found an inexhaustible source of amusement during the previous days in snapping off percussion-caps with the hammers of their rusty muskets, lost heart and plodded silently and wearily up the steep ascent from the Shweli river. I asked them what kind of drill they were taught? "Oh," they replied, "we have no time to learn drill!" The motto emblazoned on their blouses was "fear established"—*i.e.*, in the enemy. The muskets,

however, of these Terrorists are rusty, and the Terrorists themselves of little use. Major Davies tells a story which throws an illuminating light upon military matters in these parts of China. In the Ning-yüan valley he met a Lolo chief, who had got up a small rebellion the year before against the Chinese. On condition of his changing his allegiance and joining the Chinese forces against the independent Lolos, he was granted a full pardon. He and his irregulars were then sent to the front because, as the Chinese cynically remarked, "they are stupid men who are not afraid of dying." The chief's army act was inscribed on a red placard and carried by an advance guard, and read as follows:—

PENALTIES FOR BREACH OF DISCIPLINE.

For not obeying bugle calls . .	decapitation.
For losing arms or ammunition .	"
For destroying property of civilians	"
For being drunk and fighting .	the stocks.
For taking a wrong rifle . .	"
&c.	&c.

A new military spirit is unquestionably

being born among the Chinese of the eastern and northern provinces, but it has not yet permeated the western provinces.

On February 25th I gazed down from the summit of the "Momein pass" of Margary upon a large flat-bottomed basin covered with paddy-fields, and a little later passed through the city gates of T'eng Yüeh.

CHAPTER XVI.

T'ENG YÜEH TO BHAMO.

At T'eng Yüeh I found Mr Maze, Commissioner of Customs, and his colleagues, who entertained me hospitably during my two days' stay in the town. This latter resembles other towns in Yün-nan, and requires no particular description. It is the first objective of caravans coming from Burma, but of the foreign goods imported only a comparatively small proportion remain for local consumption. Its foreign trade amounted in 1906 to 1,397,877 *Hk. Tls.*

On the last day of February I started on the last lap of my long journey. At Nan-tien, where I halted for the night, the lady in charge of the best inn refused to take me

in because, she declared, she wanted no foreign devils in her place, though this piece of news was sedulously kept from me at the time. I found myself in consequence in a small and filthy hostelry, the only room available being a passage room through which the half-dozen inmates of the inner chamber perpetually passed. On the following day I marched twenty miles to Kangai. We were now in the valley of the Ta-ping river, a fine broad expanse hemmed in on either side by high mountain-ranges. The nature of the country, too, began to change as we fell to a level of under 3000 feet, large clumps of big bamboos growing on the lower slopes, and huge shady banyan-trees becoming common. The country is inhabited by Shans, a pleasant and peaceful people. Their women are conspicuous by reason of their enormous head-dress, consisting of a turban of dark-blue material widening towards the top, and standing as much as a foot high. Two Shan soldiers were sent with me as a guard of honour, but as neither of them could speak or understand Chinese, and no one of my

followers could understand Shan, their presence was more ornamental than useful.

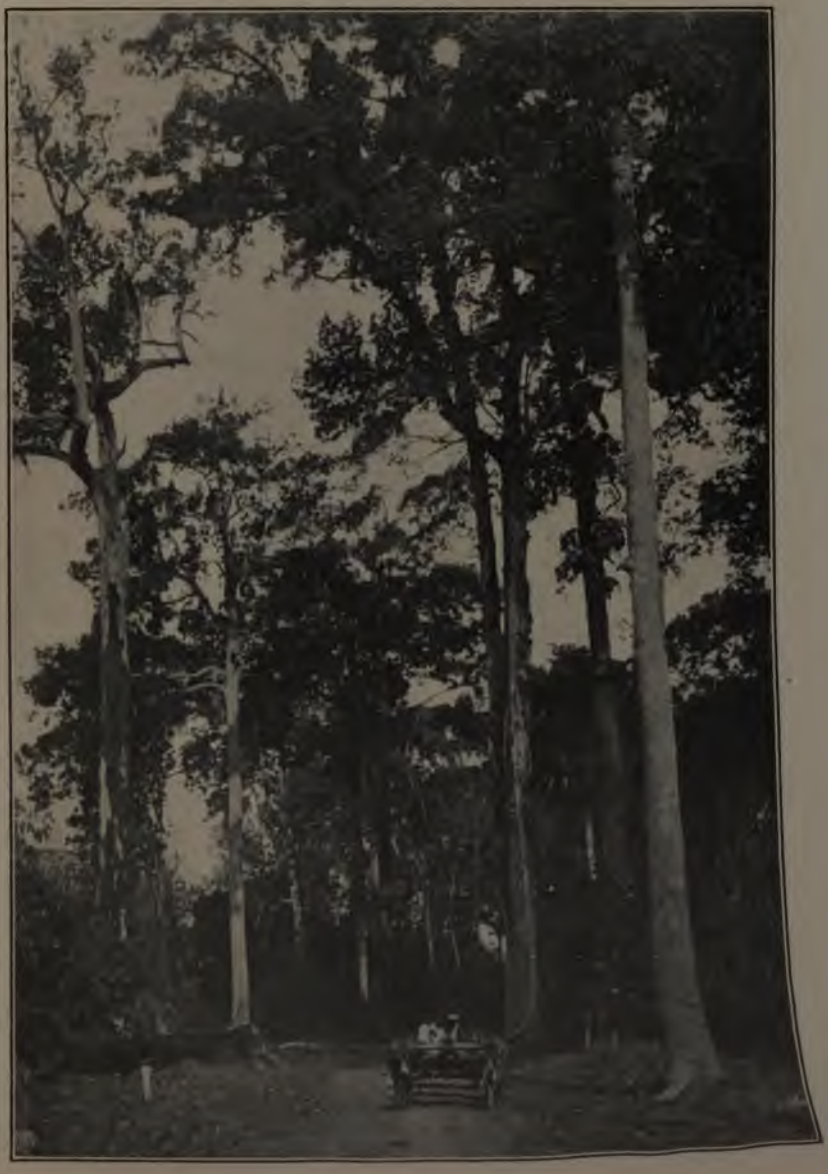
From Kangai we marched sometimes close along the river's edge, sometimes at a distance from it. Here and there picturesque Shan villages were to be seen half hidden among clumps of giant bamboo and wide-spreading banyans. These latter trees were dotted about along the road, and provided pleasant spots at which to halt. At Lung-chang-kai, where we halted for the night, market was in full swing, the women of a variety of tribes, profusely ornamented with silver bracelets round arms and neck, mixing with the stately Shans, and producing a varied and animated scene. Here, as in most of the Shan villages through which I passed, I saw bottles of sweets from Glasgow conspicuous among the small stocks of foreign goods on sale at the stalls and booths. Thirty years earlier Gill had found Bryant & May's matches "sold at Manwyne for 25 *cash* a-box, though the price seems incredible." Bryant & May have, however, succumbed to Japanese competition, matches from which country may be bought anywhere

along the road at a cost not of 25 *cash*, but of 5 *cash* a-box!

The New Year was, to my annoyance, still being celebrated, and I was kept awake half the night by a discordant fanfare on horns, gongs, and drums. As usual, these serenaders selected a position immediately outside the hovel in which I was housed, under the mistaken idea that they were contributing to the pleasures of my existence, and with the ever-present hope that *cash* would be forthcoming by way of return for this service. It is no use trying to explain to a Chinese that you would prefer to go to sleep: he would simply ask you why, if that is the case, you do not do so? If you endeavour to explain to him that the reason why you do not do so is because of the noise he is making, he simply cannot understand you. The reason, of course, is that no combination of clanging and jarring discords has as yet been discovered which is capable of preventing the Chinese from sleeping when he feels disposed to, and his mind is consequently incapable of grasping the idea that any one can be so constituted as to be

prevented from falling asleep by any external circumstances. As Dr Smith has said, "It would be easy to raise in China an army of a million men—nay, of ten millions—tested by competitive examination as to their capacity to go to sleep across three wheelbarrows, with head downwards, like a spider, their mouths wide open and a fly inside!"

The last stage in Chinese territory is Manshien, a collection of a score or so of huts of bamboo matting plastered with mud. Across the river to the north the houses of Manwyne are visible among a grove of trees—the scene of the murder of Augustus Margary. The old road passes through Manwyne, and is still largely used by caravans owing to the better accommodation and supplies which it provides. But on the south bank, from Manshien onwards, the new road becomes a wide and well-graded mountain path, recently constructed by British engineers,—at China's expense, as far as it lies in her territory,—and it is borne pleasantly in upon the traveller, surfeited with the vileness of Chinese tracks, that he is at last within reach of a civilising Power.



In the forests of Upper Burma.

In the forests of Upper Burma.

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An officer in charge of a small frontier guard quartered at Manshien accompanied me to the frontier. Beyond the village the level plain down which I had been marching for the past two days comes to an end, and the Ta-ping river forces its way along a deep and narrow valley between mountain walls covered with dense vegetation. After marching for about twelve miles we came upon two or three sheds of bamboo matting on the jungle-covered banks of a mountain torrent, the Kulika. This stream forms the boundary between China and Burma, and a guard of ten Chinese soldiers is posted here. It is characteristic of the part of the world in which one is travelling, that with a scientifically devised and well-constructed road on either side, one finds nothing but a large tree-trunk to carry one safely across the frontier stream. And the reason for this anomaly is even more characteristic—namely, an inability on the part of the two coterminous Powers to come to any agreement as to which of them should

In the forests of Upper Burma.

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have the care of a bridge, should it be constructed.

For three days after crossing the frontier one travels on through magnificent tropical scenery. Huge flowering trees cover the mountain-sides, great creepers trail from branch to branch, lovely tree-ferns, and other vegetation brought into being by a combination of heat and moisture, abound on all sides. The road is excellently built, but passes through a practically uninhabited tract of country until it debouches on the third day on to the Bhamo plain. Rest-houses providing shelter for the night exist, but supplies are not forthcoming, and this was pointed out to me by my Chinese coolies as a grave disadvantage to the road. In the eyes of the Chinese, the state of a road from an engineering point of view is not comparable in importance with the facilities which it holds out for obtaining pork and rice. Caravans of mules and ponies were met with here and there, mostly carrying loads of raw cotton from Burma

to T'eng Yüeh; but I noted it as an interesting fact that on the road from Sui Fu on the Yang-tsze to Yün-nan Fu, vile as that track is, I observed considerably more traffic than I did on the Bhamo-T'eng Yüeh route, while the T'eng Yüeh-Tali Fu-Yün-nan Fu road, so far as I could judge, had the least amount of traffic of the three.

On March 7th I marched into the little town of Bhamo, and here, to all intents and purposes, my journey may be said to have had its termination. The long tramp across the heart of China was finished, and I was once more under the protection of the Union Jack and surrounded by the comforts and conveniences of civilisation. I travelled by steamer through the defiles of the Irrawadi, spent a few days in Mandalay and Rangoon, picking up at the former place news from the outside world which had been accumulating in the shape of letters and papers for the past five months, and reached Calcutta at the end of the month. But I am here concerned

only with the Far East, and with my arrival in Burma I have reached the western limit of my present field of study. My narrative of travel is at an end; but there lies before me the task of setting before the reader the results of my investigations, and the conclusions that are to be drawn from them. Questions of trade, of the building of railways, of the present temper of the Chinese, of Japan's position in the Far East, await discussion; but the chapters dealing with these subjects may conveniently be reserved for a second volume, and I may not inappropriately close the present volume with a brief historical sketch of the making of the frontier which walls in the Burmese possessions of Great Britain, and marks the limit of Chinese expansion towards the south-west.

PART III.

THE MAKING OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER

"Frontiers are the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nations."

—LORD CURZON.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MAKING OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER.

PART I.: GREAT BRITAIN AND CHINA.

"FRONTIERS are the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nations;"[1] and of all the frontiers which have claimed the attention of British statesmen, none are comparable in interest and importance to the land frontiers of the Indian empire. When the Indian frontier is spoken of, the mind inevitably flies to the tumbled labyrinth of mountains and valleys strewn for hundreds of miles along the wild and pas-

[1] Lord Curzon in his *Romanes Lecture*, delivered at Oxford in 1907.

sionate Afghan borderland suggested by the well-worn phrase "the North-West Frontier." But there is another frontier, which may be termed "the North-East Frontier," which has received but a modest share of public attention, but which nevertheless can boast its tale of tragedies and comedies, and which has been responsible from time to time for no small amount of perturbation among diplomatists and even European Cabinets. It is of this frontier, stretching from the little-known highlands of eastern Tibet in the north to Siam and French Indo-China in the south, that I propose to speak; and since tragedies play so fine a part in the making of an empire's frontiers, let me begin with one of the pathetic tragedies of the North-East Frontier.

At a point where the magnificent river-side esplanade of Shanghai sweeps past the substantial and affluent-looking buildings of the British Consulate on the one side, and skirts a stretch of land known as the public gardens on the other, to pass on over the Su-chow creek to that part of the

"model settlement" which stretches away down the river in rows of solid brick buildings, and eventually noisy, smoking cotton mills towards Wu-sung and the sea, stands a prettily executed monument in stone. The passer-by learns from an inscription that it was erected in memory of Augustus Raymond Margary, who died a violent death in the wild regions of far-away Yün-nan in February 1875, whither he had proceeded, under orders of the strictest secrecy, on a mission to which the Government attached the greatest importance. "I started off with a heavy heart," he wrote in his diary on August 24th. "Passing by the club, which was flaring with gas at every window, I saw the white-coated figures of the late birds, some poring over the mail papers in their luxurious library, others finishing up their billiards in a higher storey. I hurried on like a fugitive, and hid my face from one or two friends strolling home from a dinner somewhere, for I did not want to waste time in explanations, or to be hindered by post-prandial larks. It was

quite painful to feel I was going away on a great journey, and yet could not take a warm farewell of my friends."[1] Nevertheless, the duty with which he had been entrusted—namely, that of travelling overland to meet the mission about to be despatched from India to survey a new route for commerce between Burma and Western China—was one which excited his keenest enthusiasm. "Only think what a glorious opportunity I shall have of seeing this wonderful country, and of bringing to light numerous facts as yet unknown from regions untrodden by foreigners. You cannot think how elated I am,"[2] is a single example of many that might be quoted from his journal or his letters, showing the intense interest and satisfaction which, despite the most cruel ill-health, he felt in the journey which lay before him. And the goal to be attained was kept steadfastly in sight. "You must picture me standing alone on the heights of the Momein pass, far away

[1] Letter to his mother, August 24th, 1874.

[2] Letter to his parents, August 15th, 1874.

Monument to Augustus Raymond Margary.

on the Burmese frontier, and anxiously scanning the country beyond for the first glimpse of Indian helmets approaching from the west. Then you can picture the meeting, China and India grasping hands, and awakening those primeval echoes with a British hurrah over the *fait accompli.*"[1]

The Momein pass was reached, beyond on the Burmese frontier the Indian helmets were found, the long solitary journey had been successfully accomplished. But with the advance of the Indian mission a sudden change came over the scene. The gallant traveller, who as an individual had met, with but few exceptions, with the greatest courtesy and the warmest hospitality, was treacherously and brutally murdered, and the mission itself forced to beat a precarious and undignified retreat to the land whence it had come. Thirty and more years have rolled by since the defeat of the ill-starred expedition, Upper Burma has since fallen into the lap of Great Britain, the ponderous wheels of the Chinese diplo-

[1] Letter to his parents, August 15th, 1874.

matic machine have been set in motion from time to time with a view to determining boundaries between the now co-terminous empires, but the engaging spectacle of India and China grasping hands can even now be only said to have been realised in a modified degree.

For more than a century the prospect of opening up communications between Burma and Western China has excited the attention not only of the British mercantile community resident in Rangoon,—naturally directly interested in such a project,—but of a far wider public in England itself; while the British Government, moved from time to time by the importunity of the associated chambers of commerce in England, India, and China, has made fitful and not altogether well-timed endeavours to further the various schemes proposed. Such trade as there was between Burma and China—amounting to £500,000 half a century ago—came to an abrupt termination with the outbreak of the Mohammedan rebellion in 1855, which trailed with fire and sword across the province of Yün-nan for a

period of seventeen years; and it was this unwelcome cessation of trade which led to the despatch of an expedition, under Colonel Sladen, across the borderland into Yün-nan in 1868. The chief objects of this mission were laid down by General Fytche, Chief Commissioner of British Burma, to be "to discover the cause of the cessation of the trade formerly existing by these routes, the exact position held by the Kakhyens, Shans, and Panthays with reference to that traffic, and their disposition or otherwise to resuscitate it."

Such objects were, no doubt, perfectly legitimate; yet it is not difficult to conceive that a British mission, travelling into the heart of a disaffected Chinese province, would not be viewed with either satisfaction or equanimity by the Chinese; and though "care was especially taken to disown any political partisanship, and to proclaim to all that the object was to explore in the interests of commerce,"[1] the cordial welcome accorded to the party by the Mohammedan rebel in power

[1] 'Mandalay to Momein'—Dr Anderson.

at T'eng Yüeh, and the bond of friendship which sprang up between the Chinese Mohammedans and their co-religionists of the British escort, were unquestionably calculated to excite the suspicion and hostility of the Chinese Government. Certain arrangements for regulating trans-frontier trade were come to with the Mohammedan ruler of T'eng Yüeh, and the mission carried away with them "letters expressive of the desire of the Panthay Sultan's Government to enter into friendly relations with our Government, and to foster mutual trade."[1]

The belief of the mission that a Mohammedan empire was about to be established in Western China was ill-founded, and its achievements, as far as practical results are concerned, were consequently of little value, while its friendly attitude towards the Mohammedan faction undoubtedly militated against the success of a second expedition, despatched under Colonel Brown during the opening days of 1875. Chinese suspicion, moreover, as to the projects of Great Britain as a Mohammedan Power, already aroused by the procedure of

[1] 'Mandalay to Momein'—Dr Anderson.

the Sladen Mission in 1868, had received confirmation in the interim in the shape of a convention contracted with another Mohammedan rebel, on another troublous frontier of the flowery kingdom, the Athalik Ghazi Khan, Yakub Beg, who was playing at empire on his own in the dim distance of Chinese Turkestan. And while it is claimed that the Peking Government had given their sanction to the expedition by signing the passports for both Margary and the party under Colonel Brown, they subsequently denied that they had been given to understand that the passports granted were for any purpose beyond that of mere travel. However this may be, the immediate result of the advance of the mission was, as has been seen, the cold-blooded murder of a gallant English gentleman and the precipitate retreat of the remainder of the party; the subsequent effect, the opening of the ports of Ichang, Wuhu, Wenchow, and Pakhoi to trade, and of a number of villages on the Yang-tsze as ports of call.[1]

Hereafter a number of circumstances conspired to concentrate the attention of European

[1] By the Chifu Convention of 1876.

Cabinets upon the rapidly growing problems of the troublous Sino-Burmese borderland. An ineradicable belief in the richness and immeasurable commercial potentialities of the south-western provinces of China still stirred the pulses and fired the imagination of the mercantile community when, on New Year's Day 1886, a large additional slice of territory fell like a ripe cherry into the mouth of Britain, shaken from the tree by the thinly-veiled political ambitions and aggressive machinations of the budding imperialism of France.[1]

Out of this rearrangement of ancient territories sprang inevitable questions as to the definition of respective boundaries and rights. The bubble of Chinese greatness still awaited pricking at the hands of Japan, and the exasperating subserviency displayed by the British Foreign Office to Chinese susceptibilities was seized upon by the astute diplomatists of that country and speedily turned to good account. A demand was preferred

[1] For the history of the annexation of Upper Burma, see next chapter.

to the British Government for the continuance of the despatch of a decennial mission of tribute, said to be due from Burma in recognition of her vassalage. The Burmans, however, stoutly denied the claims of China to suzerainty, and declared the arrangement to be a reciprocal one, by which each country had agreed to send complimentary presents to one another every ten years.[1] Lord Salisbury had

[1] The origin of the complimentary decennial mission between the two countries was as follows. In 1765 the ill-treatment of certain Chinese traders at the Ta-ping river and in Keng Tung brought down a Chinese army, which met with defeat. Two years later a second Chinese force of 250,000 foot and 25,000 horse again met with disaster, the Burmese regaining the eight Shan States of the Ta-ping basin which had been included in the Chinese empire for many centuries. The following year the Chinese made one more effort to inflict defeat upon the redoubtable Burmans, but finding themselves again unequal to the task, opened negotiations and concluded a treaty in which, according to the Burmese, no mention was made of Burma being a vassal of China, but an arrangement come to by which the respective monarchs of China and Burma were to exchange letters and presents once every ten years. Though Chinese records lay great stress upon the duty of Burma to send tribute to Peking, and omit all reference to any duty to reciprocate the mission, the Burmese contention is supported by the fact that China was, in point of fact, the first to send a mission, which reached Theinni in 1787, carrying a large number of presents

scarcely concluded an arrangement on these lines when the short-lived Cabinet of 1885—"the Cabinet of caretakers"—went out, and were replaced, early in February 1886, by a Ministry drawn from that party whose advent to power is always hailed with satisfaction and delight by all and sundry intent on knocking off corners of the empire, and extracting concessions from Great Britain abroad. Lord Rosebery, the new Foreign Minister, took the earliest opportunity of reversing the decision of his predecessor and agreeing to the despatch of presents from Burma only, "thereby unequivocally admitting China's claims to suzerainty, and gratuitously tendering a most abject submission to the Son of Heaven."[1]

The proceedings which followed upon this decision provide a light and comic interlude in the usually ponderous annals of serious diplomacy. The Chinese envoy in London,

and a letter from the Emperor K'ien Lung couched in terms of equality, except that he spoke of himself as the "elder brother," and of the King of Ava as his "younger brother." (See Sir A. Phayre's 'History of Burma.')

[1] 'Far Cathay and Farther India'—General A. R. MacMahon—p. 5.

the Marquis Tsêng, consented to waive the claim of his Government to a tribute mission in return for a readjustment of the frontier which, among other things, would place Bhamo on the Chinese side. Lord Rosebery, unbeknown to Marquis Tsêng, telegraphed to Mr O'Conor, the British Chargé d'Affaires, to ascertain the feeling in Peking. The Yamen, it was found, knew little and cared less about the Marquis's projects of frontier rearrangement, but did care a great deal about the requisition before them for passports for a mission under Mr Macauley to travel through Tibet, and were likewise much exercised to know what provision was being made for the despatch of a mission from Burma to Peking. With this information in hand, the wires were set in motion once more; and while Lord Rosebery indulged in further animated discussions on the advantages and counter-disadvantages of various boundary delimitations with Marquis Tsêng, Mr O'Conor successfully carried out his instructions to put off at all costs the question of frontier demarcation by the conclusion of the convention of 1886, the

bribe for the temporary disposal of the frontier difficulty being the withdrawal of the requisition for permits for the expedition to Tibet, and the acceptance of China's demand for a decennial mission from Burma, to which, as has been pointed out, she had no valid claim. We may venture to hope that it came to the notice of his lordship that when passing through Yün-nan in 1894 (the year in which Lord Rosebery became First Minister of the Crown) Dr Morrison found the Chinese "daily expecting the arrival of two white elephants from Burma, which were coming in charge of the British Resident in Singai (Bhamo), as a present to the Emperor, *and were the official recognition by England that Burma is still a tributary of the Middle Kingdom.*"[1]

Upon the fatuity of the policy which led up to this situation I have descanted elsewhere.[2] The net results have been a tiresome and long-protracted series of negotiations which only found solution in the convention

[1] 'An Australian in China.' The italics are mine.

[2] See in 'On the Outskirts of Empire in Asia,' chapter xxvii., entitled "A Tibetan Episode."

of 1897, and indirectly a troublesome crop of political questions culminating in the Younghusband Mission of 1904 to the capital of Tibet.

The convention of 1886 was so far successful that it staved off for six years the question of frontier delimitation; but by a curious coincidence, with the return of Lord Rosebery to the Foreign Office in 1892 the border problem again cropped up, and in the convention of March 1st, 1894, a tentative agreement was at last drawn up.

It is unnecessary to describe the frontier herein decided upon, because, *more Sinico*, the provisions of the agreement were never carried into effect, a glaring breach of Article V. by the Chinese rendering the convention void. By this article England had agreed to renounce in favour of China "all the suzerain rights in and over the States of Munglem and Kiang Hung formerly possessed by the Kings of Ava concurrently with the Emperors of China." This was done with the sole proviso that "his Majesty the Emperor of China shall not, without previously coming to an agreement

with her Brittanic Majesty, cede either Munglem or Kiang Hung, or any portion thereof, to any other nation." Since, however, the notoriously anti-British Inspector of Militia on the frontier, Li Shao Yen, immediately afterwards took it upon himself to hand over a portion of Kiang Hung to France, it became necessary to toil all over the old ground once more, and it was not until 1897 that the question was finally closed. By a convention concluded in February of that year Great Britian consented to "waive her objections to the alienation by China by the convention with France of June 20th, 1895, of territory forming a portion of Kiang Hung, in derogation of the provisions of the convention between Great Britain and China of March 1st, 1894," in return for certain concessions on China's part in connection with the previously arranged frontier. By this instrument it was determined that the frontier to be demarcated should commence at a high peak situated approximately in latitude 25° 35′ and longitude 98° 14′ east of Greenwich, and terminate at a point on the Mekong where the district

of Kiang Cheng impinges upon the territory of Kiang Hung. It was agreed that a tract of country to the south of the Nam Wan river belonging to China should be held on a perpetual lease by Great Britain, afterwards fixed at 1000 rupees a-year, and that neither Munglem nor any part of Kiang Hung on the right bank of the Mekong, nor any part of it in Chinese possession on the left bank, might be ceded to any other nation without Great Britain's consent. Owing to the veil of obscurity which still hung over the geographical peculiarities of the nebulous country lying to the north of latitude 25°, it was decided that the settlement of this portion of the frontier should be left to the more accurate knowledge of a future date.

Beyond the settlement of the much-debated frontier, some attention was paid to the all-important matter of commerce and communications, which had been productive of a vast outpouring of literature and discussion, of fruitless action, and of no little disappointment and humiliation in the past. With certain specified exceptions, Great Britain granted free entry

and free exit to importations and exportations across the frontier, while China gave reductions of three-tenths of the general tariff of the Imperial Maritime Customs on imports and four-tenths on exports over the same ground. Permission was granted China to establish a consul at Rangoon, and to Great Britain to appoint similar functionaries at Momein or Shun-ning Fu and Ssŭ-mao, and British subjects acquired the right to establish themselves and trade at these places under the same conditions as at the treaty ports in other parts of China. And beyond all this, arrangements were made for connecting the telegraphic system of the two countries; permission was accorded to "Chinese vessels carrying merchandise, ores, and minerals of all kinds, and coming from or destined for China, freely to navigate the Irrawadi on the same conditions as to dues and other matters as British vessels," and China agreed to consider whether the conditions of trade justify the construction of railways in Yünnan, and, "in the event of their construction, to connect them with the Burmese lines."

So much for the Agreement of 1897, which

A street in Bhamo.

determines, as far as any document can do so, the boundaries of Great Britain and China at the junction of their respective dominions. Before touching upon the part played by a third Power — France — in the making of the North-East Frontier, it may be well to narrate briefly the events following upon the conclusion of the Agreement, thus bringing the story of the frontier, as far as Great Britain and China are concerned, up to the present day.

The actual work of demarcating the frontier, accepted by both countries in the Agreement of 1897, still remained to be done, and a party of British and Chinese commissioners were occupied with this task up to the end of the winter of 1899-1900.

The task was no easy one, and resulted in a boundary-line being marked out which is not accepted *in toto* to this day by the Government of China. But apart from differences between the British and Chinese commissioners as to the interpretation of the boundary clauses of the Agreement, of which more in a moment, no little difficulty was experienced owing to the attitude of the border tribes. Of these, the

most uncouth and the most troublesome were the wild Wa, a primitive people occupying a block of territory extending for about one hundred miles along the Salwin, and for half that distance inland to the watershed between that river and the Mekong, an area bisected by the 99th parallel of east longitude and lying between and on either side of the 22nd and 23rd parallels of latitude.[1] The most objectionable feature of this tribe is its head-hunting proclivities, though it appears that heads, being believed to be necessary to ensure good crops, peace, and prosperity, are sought after as a result of erroneous agricultural theories rather than out of mere wantonness or lust of killing. "Without a head they could not hope to have good crops. . . . When, therefore, a new village is formed, or a sacrifice of a special kind is needed, the young Was go out in bands head-hunting —which means that they waylay any strangers they may happen to meet and deprive them of their heads. The hunting season opens in March and lasts through April—until, in fact,

[1] 'Gazetteer of Upper Burma,' part i., vol. i. p. 495.

sufficient heads to ensure a good harvest have been obtained."[1] However worthy in intention, the habit is none the less objectionable in practice, and is, indeed, as Marco Polo would doubtless have remarked—as he did of another matter—"a very evil custom and a parlous!" The market value of different varieties of heads is, according to the 'Gazetteer of Upper Burma,' as follows: "The skulls of the unwarlike Lem come lowest. They can sometimes be had for two rupees. La'hu heads can be had for about three times as much. . . . Burmese heads have not been available for nearly a generation, and Chinamen's heads run to about fifty rupees, for they are dangerous game. European heads have not come on the market; there are no quotations."[2] This last sentence, it is to be feared, no longer holds good, for two members of the boundary commission, Major W. Kiddle, R.A.M.C., and Mr A. B. Sutherland, fell victims to this peculiar greed, thus adding yet one

[1] F. W. Carey, 'Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,' vol. xxxvi.

[2] 'Gazetteer of Upper Burma,' part i., vol. i. p. 502.

more to the tragedies of the frontier. Mr Litton, too, narrowly escaped a similar fate, being saved by the prompt action of a Chinese officer.

It was found possible, however, to impress upon the understanding of the wild Was the necessity of attuning their conduct, in their intercourse with Great Britain, to the standards demanded by the canons of civilised society, and the chief difficulty in the way of a satisfactory and lasting delimitation arose not out of the social *faux pas* of the border tribes, but out of the action of the Chinese commissioners themselves. All went well until the winter of 1898-1900, when the Chinese commissioner suddenly raised objections to the proposed demarcation of a section of the frontier, about 200 miles in length, lying between a point at the confluence of the Nam Hsung with the Nam Ting on the north and Pangsang Nalawt on the south. Producing a map, now known as the Hsieh map, which he declared had been signed by Lord Rosebery and the Chinese Minister Hsieh in 1894, he accused the British

commissioner, Sir G. Scott, of duplicity, and wound up an insulting despatch by declaring that the British Foreign Office had secretly prepared the map attached to the Agreement of 1897 with a view to altering the line of frontier shown on the Hsieh map.

The British commissioner, on the other hand, held that if forgery had been committed, it was not in Downing Street but in Peking; and knowing something of the immense capacity of Chinese diplomatists for wasting time, judged that it would be better to complete the demarcation of the frontier first, and then begin to think about despatch writing afterwards. This was accordingly done, and the section of the frontier thus demarcated without the assistance of the Chinese, and known as "Scott's line," was forwarded with the rest of the frontier line to Peking. Here it remains, and is likely to remain, the subject from time to time of polite discussion between the representatives of Great Britain and of China, the former declaring that it is regarded by his Government as the frontier, and the latter

rejoining with perfect amiability that this is a view of the case with which the Chinese Government is quite unable to concur.[1]

Beyond the demarcation of the Sino-Burmese frontier south of the high peak mentioned in the Agreement, a boundary-line between the territories of the two countries north of that point has been roughly laid down. From the peak, situated in latitude 25° 35′ and longitude 98° 14′, the line has been carried north-east to a peak 11,500 feet high in the range hemming in the Salwin on the west and thence due north along the summit of the range to a point midway between latitude 26° and 27°, whence it has been taken across the river to the top of the range forming the watershed between the Salwin and the Mekong. From here it is drawn north again along the summit of the range to a point about midway between latitudes 27° and 28°, where the Salwin is recrossed and the line

[1] The following is the reply to a question put by me to the Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons on June 1st, 1908: "The Chinese Government have not yet accepted the line which H.M. Government notified to them as, in their opinion, constituting the boundary. Negotiations have taken place at intervals, but no settlement has been arrived at yet."

carried due west to a point on the river Nmai Hka, where Yün-nan is supposed to give place to Tibet.

The "North-East Frontier," then, may now be said to be a geographical reality, and the only work in connection with it which still remains—the introduction of civilisation, law, and order into the areas occupied by the less known of the border tribes—is a task which can be taken up at leisure, and which will doubtless be regarded as one which does not call for any immediate action.[1] The dictum of

[1] Speaking of Upper Burma at Mandalay on November 28th, 1901, Lord Curzon said of it that it was especially interesting to one who had made frontiers of empire his peculiar study, and who knew no spectacle more absorbing than that of Oriental peoples passing by a steady progress from backwardness to civilisation, without at the same time forfeiting the religious creed, the traditions, or the national characteristics of their race. "Here in Upper Burma," he declared, "both extremes of this process may be observed; for, on the one hand, in the settled tracts are an intelligent and tractable race, immersed in agriculture or business, and living under the sway of one of the oldest and most cultured religions; on the other hand, one has only to proceed to the north-eastern border to encounter tribes who still derive pleasure from cutting off each other's heads. . . . Here is a situation and a task that will occupy the genius of the British race for many

Sir Robert Peel, that "when civilisation and barbarism come into contact, the latter must inevitably give way,"[1] has the assent of history, and while it is certain that the eventual result of the contact of civilisation and barbarism in this neighbourhood will be in keeping with the teaching of history, there appears to be little to be gained by endeavouring to bring about by rapid and violent stages that which must sooner or later follow with the unerring certainty of a law of nature.

a long day to come. . . . I rejoice to think of what remains for those who come after me to do, and that not for many generations will India fail within its borders to provide my countrymen with the work for which their instincts seem especially to fit them among the nations of the earth."

[1] In the Scinde debate of 1844.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MAKING OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER.

PART II.: GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE.

In the preceding chapter I have outlined the history of Anglo-Chinese relations on the Burmese marches up to the present day. The part played by France in the events which led up to the annexation of Upper Burma has been mentioned, and in order to complete the sketch of the building of the frontier, it is necessary to pass in brief review the action of that Power in this part of Asia, since, for the whole of an anxious decade, she stood boldly in the way of the peaceful moulding of India's eastern frontier.

In judging of French action in Indo-China it must not be forgotten that she had at one time

aspired to become the overlord of India itself, and had actually grasped within her hand the sceptre of Indian empire. For a brief and breathless moment the whole continent of India vibrated beneath the magnetic touch of the dramatic figure of Dupleix, and when the glittering prospect opened up by him faded before the grim tenacity and forceful determination of the seamen and traders of Great Britain, a craving for empire sprang up in adjacent territories and found expression in a series of ill-conceived enterprises in the direction of Burma and Siam. Bearing in mind the disappointment suffered by her eclipse on the Indian continent, it is not altogether surprising to find that the sequence of events in Further India already described, disclosed in their onward march a growing rivalry between England and France, and pointed clearly to the danger which attended the approaching shock of collision between their rapidly converging frontiers "The game of conquest and politics in Indo-China, the vicissitudes of which had been heretofore almost confined to the struggles of the obscure

states within its bounds, were henceforth to be played by Powers from afar, and to influence the future of old European Governments."[1]

The annexation of Upper Burma sooner or later was, in all probability, inevitable; but it was the action of France which was responsible for its actual accomplishment. Rumours of a Franco-Burmese Convention aroused the suspicions of the India Office in the summer of 1885. Questions were addressed to the French Government. The paramount position of Great Britain was admitted; the Ministers of France "temporised politely and deprecated, while they did not arrest, the activities of"[2] their agent upon the spot; and it was their agent upon the spot who was guiding and controlling events in Upper Burma. Nowhere is the real story of this gentleman's proceedings so well told as in Dr Morrison's inimitable account of his journey across China in 1894. The French Political Resident, M. Haas, zealous for the greatness and the honour of his country,

[1] Sir Henry Yule in 1883.

[2] 'Life of Lord Randolph Churchill,' vol. i. p. 522.

drew up and submitted to King Theebaw the articles of a secret treaty. Let me quote Dr Morrison's own words:—

"By this treaty French influence was to become predominant in Upper Burma; the country was to become virtually a colony of France, with a community of interest with France, with France to support her in any difficulty with British Burma. Fortunately for us, French intrigue outwitted itself, and the Secret Treaty became known. It was in this way. Draft copies of the agreement, drawn up in French and Burmese, were exchanged between M. Haas and King Theebaw. But M. Haas could not read Burmese, and he distrusted the King. A trusted interpreter was necessary, and there was only one man in Mandalay that seemed to him sufficiently trustworthy. To Signor A——, then, the Italian Chargé d'Affaires and manager of the Irrawadi Flotilla Company, M. Haas went, and, pledging him to secrecy, sought his assistance as interpreter.

"As M. Haas had done, so did his Majesty the King. Two great minds were being guided by the same spirit. Theebaw could not read French, and he distrusted M. Haas. An interpreter was essential, and casting about for a trusted one, he decided that no one could serve him so faithfully as Signor A——, and straightway sought his assistance as M. Haas had done. Their fates were in his hands; which master should the Italian serve, the French or the Burmese?

He did not hesitate—he betrayed them both. Within an hour the Secret Treaty was in possession of the British Resident. Action was taken with splendid promptitude. M. de Freycinet, when pressed on the subject, repudiated any intention of acquiring for France a political predominance in Burma. An immediate pretext was found to place Theebaw in a dilemma; eleven days later the British troops had crossed the frontier, and Upper Burma was another province of our Indian Empire."[1]

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[1] The whole of these details are omitted from the account of the annexation given in the 'Gazetteer of Upper Burma'; but they are undoubtedly correct. An interesting side-light is thrown upon the matter by Major E. C. Browne in a volume entitled 'The Coming of the Great Queen,' published in 1888. Writing of the French intrigues which led to the action of Great Britain, he says: "Strangely enough, I think I know the source from which this wild enterprise sprang." He then describes how, when in Paris in 1880, he attended a meeting of "La Société de Cochin-Chine." The meeting took place in the private apartments of a nobleman, and a paper was read upon Indo-Chinese affairs, followed by a somewhat constrained discussion. The Society appeared to be "a sort of private Intelligence Department" which watched French interests in Indo-China, and "kept the Government coached up on the subject." The conclusion which he drew from his inquiries is summed up as follows: "I have often thought since that the feebly supported attempt to establish French influence at Mandalay was the outcome of this Society's investigations. The Government not improbably said to this body, 'If you can get a footing in Upper Burma without bringing us into conflict with England, we shall say you deserve well of your country.'"

Defeated in her efforts to lay hold of Upper Burma, she turned her eyes towards Siam as the next most convenient field for imperial exploitation. Great Britain could not view with equanimity the prospect of a powerful neighbour establishing herself along her eastern frontier, uncontrolled and ill-defined as such frontier was, and consisting of an ill-assorted patchwork of little-known tribes whose proclivities would be only too likely to lie in the direction of crooked diplomacy and intrigue; and being driven to action by the pressure of events, the Foreign Office fell back upon their panacea for every frontier ill—the creation of a buffer state. With this object in view, slices of her recently acquired Burmese territory were handed round to any one who could be found willing to take them,—China, as has already been recorded, receiving the state of Kiang Hung, and Siam being presented with the adjoining territory of Kiang Cheng. This arrangement served for a time, until the discovery was suddenly made by the explorers and historiographers of France that the rulers of Siam were in unlawful possession of territory

A Burmese Pagoda.

which of right belonged to France as the overlord of Cochin China and Annam, resulting in a declaration by the French ambassador in London in the spring of 1893 that his Government claimed for Annam the whole of the country on the left bank of the Mekong—a declaration at which Lord Rosebery "could not conceal his surprise."

The story of the subsequent operations between France and Siam, which were brought to an abrupt conclusion by the appearance of two French gunboats at Bangkok, need not be retold here. The British Government had not the slightest intention of burning their fingers by intervening on behalf of Siam; but with the collapse of that country before the determined attitude of France, French claims showed a disconcerting tendency to expand, and before the summer of 1893 was through, embraced the whole of the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, including consequently a portion of the state of Kiang Cheng already conditionally presented by Great Britain to Siam. Once more was there a flutter of excitement in the Foreign Office dovecot, and

after declaring that "the approach of a great military Power like France to a frontier lying naked to attack could not be regarded with indifference," Lord Dufferin succeeded—at no small sacrifice of territory and prestige—in securing the assent of France to the formation of a buffer state. A protocol embodying this proposition, and providing for the despatch of a commission to collect the data necessary for its geographical definition, was signed on July 31st. The difficulties, however, in the way of bringing into being a satisfactory buffer state only grew as the question of its boundaries and its government were discussed, and the declaration of Lord Rosebery in October 1893 that, in the event of negotiations failing, the British Government would have to take "such measures as they might consider necessary for their own protection," followed as it was by a curt retort from the French representative to the effect that the integrity of Luang Prabang was of the highest interest to France, and that "neither the French Chamber nor French public opinion would tolerate its disintegration," showed how

perilously near to the powder-magazine the match had come.

The war-cloud fortunately blew by, the parties interested agreeing to postpone any definite decision as to mutual concessions to a later date, and it was not until 1896—the commission arranged for under the terms of the protocol of July 1893 not having started until December 1894—that the matter was finally adjusted. By an Agreement signed in that year by Lord Salisbury and the French ambassador in London, the integrity of the kingdom of Siam was guaranteed and the line of division between "the possessions or spheres of influence" of the two countries to the north of that state determined. By the boundary therein decided Great Britain admitted the claims of France to the ownership of the Möng Hsing district of Kiang Cheng—an admission which was all the easier to make, as Lord Salisbury somewhat cynically remarked in forwarding a copy of the Agreement to the British ambassador in Paris, owing to "its extent and intrinsic value not being large,"

and because "on account of its unhealthy character, it had no great attractions for Great Britain."

By Article IV. of the same instrument, it was agreed that "all commercial and other privileges and advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yün-nan and Ssŭch'uan, either to Great Britain or France, in virtue of their respective conventions with China, of March 1st, 1894, and June 20th, 1895, and all privileges and advantages of any nature which may in the future be conceded in these two Chinese provinces, either to Great Britain or to France, shall, as far as rests with them, be extended and rendered common to both Powers and to their nationals and dependents, and they engage to use their influence and good offices with the Chinese Government for this purpose."

With the conclusion of this Agreement was closed a chapter of bitter diplomatic warfare in the history of Anglo-French relations. Hereafter the feelings of the two nations towards one another steadily improved, until in 1904 Lord Lansdowne was able to place

a seal upon their friendship in the shape of the famous document known as the Anglo-French Agreement of April of that year, dealing with outstanding matters of difference between the two countries in all four quarters of the globe. A brief declaration with regard to Siam found a place in this momentous Agreement. Articles I. and II. of the Agreement of 1896, by which France and Great Britain undertook to refrain from any armed intervention or the acquisition of special privileges in the Siamese possessions which were included within the basin of the Menam river, were reaffirmed, and further extended to bring the understanding between the two Powers into line with the development of events which had taken place between 1896 and 1904. Both England and France had entered into Agreements with Siam—Great Britain with regard to the Malay Peninsula and France with regard to the Mekong valley,—the preponderating influence of Great Britain in the western and of France in the eastern portions of the Siamese dominions being tacitly recognised. This tacit understanding found documentary expression

in the declaration concerning Siam included in the Agreement of 1904, the two Contracting Parties, while disclaiming all idea of annexing any Siamese teritory, declaring nevertheless by mutual agreement that "the influence of Great Britain shall be recognised by France in the territories situated to the west of the basin of the river Menam, and that the influence of France shall be recognised by Great Britain in the territories situated to the east of the same region, all the Siamese possessions on the east and south-east of the zone above described and the adjacent islands coming thus henceforth under French influence, and, on the other hand, all Siamese possessions on the west of this zone and of the Gulf of Siam, including the Malay Peninsula and the adjacent islands, coming under English influence."

A settlement of the Franco-Siamese frontier has been finally come to in a treaty signed between the two countries at Bangkok on March 23rd, 1907, the chief feature of which is the cession to France by Siam of the territories of Battambang, Siem-Reap, and

Sisophon in return for the territories of Dan-Saï and Kratt, and all the islands situated to the south of Cape Lemling as far as, and inclusive of, Koh-Kut.

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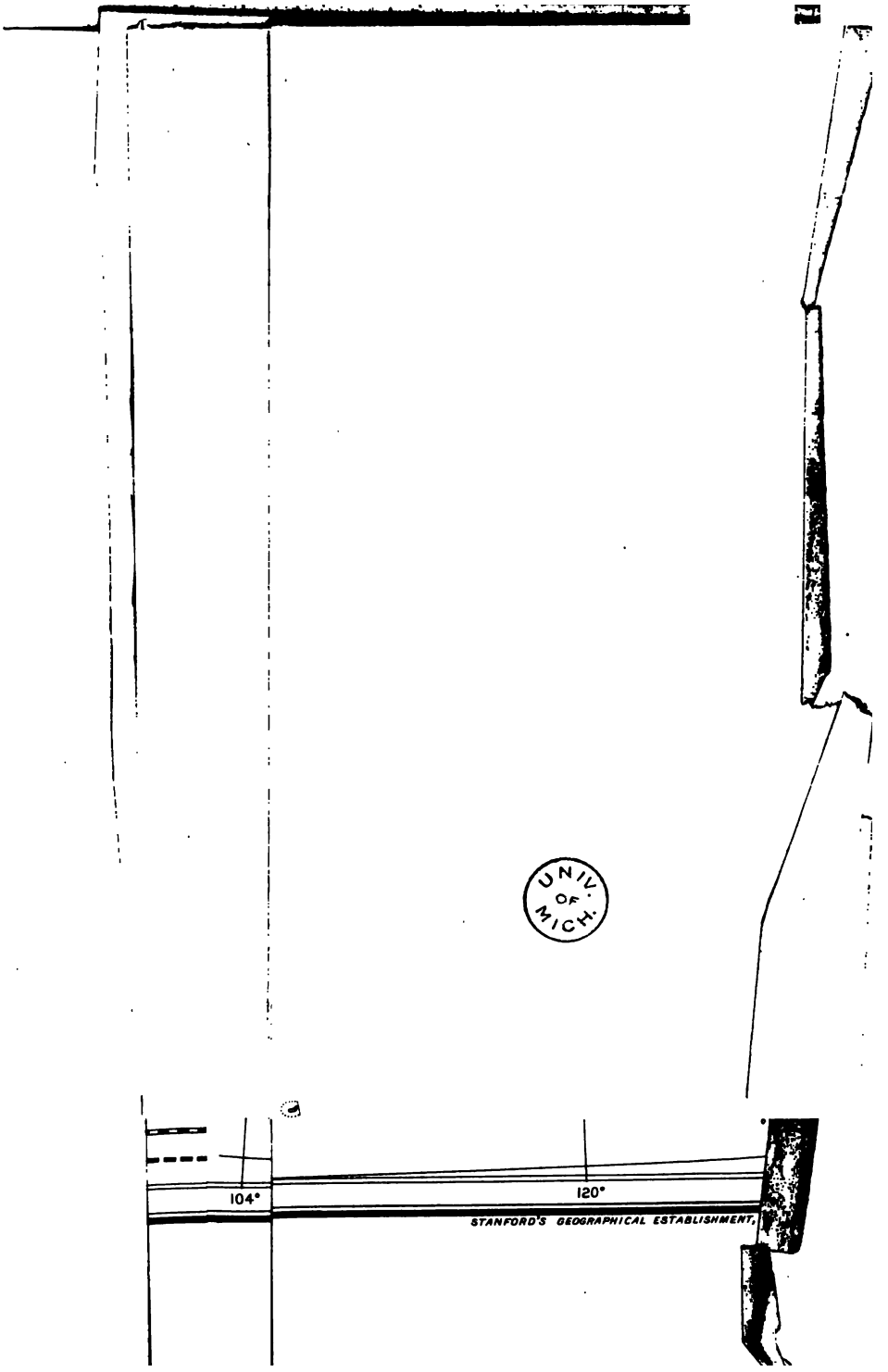

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